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Special Section on Iraq

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Editor's Introduction

As the present issue of *Logos* is being released, we hover on the brink of war. It is by no means an overly-moralistic proposition to claim that American politics is seeing, in the current Bush Administration, one of its lowest points in decades. Indeed, this may ostensibly resonate with partisan overtones, but the moral as well as the political critique of the present political situation calls for further rational dialogue and action in order to make any democratic impulses concrete. Even more, as events change day by day, there is a clear realization that the present administration in the United States is less interested in political dialogue and peace than in aggression and control. In this sense, a distinction must be made between *imperium* and *dominium*--the former is a political logic of *control* whereas the latter is one of direct *ownership*. The current logic has been driven not by *dominium* but by *imperium*--oil is certainly a factor, but also a world image of political harmony with American interests serving as the guiding principles of this *imperium* over Middle East. This harmony is not one of democracy and free markets as its apologists would claim, but of the control of political legacies for the future interests of domestic political and economic interests.

In this sense, the politics of the present may seem to divide along a simplistic division of left and right--but this is not the case. The left has not been vocal enough concerning its opposition to the leadership of Saddam Hussein as well as leaders such as Kim Jung Il. The Enlightenment discourse has been obfuscated and the result has been a veritable field day for right-wing pundits and commentators. The current issue of *Logos* presents critical views on the current debacle in Iraq as well as other views on American foreign policy by [Dick Howard](#), the media by [Doug Kellner](#) as well as a critical reading of the work of [Dinesh D'Souza](#), a well-known right-wing commentator and writer.

What these critical views attempt to open is nothing more than a critical discourse on contemporary political and social consciousness. One may reject some of the political assertions or disagree with this or that political fact; but it would be difficult to argue that a rational analysis of present events has been the order of the day. To this end, the present issue of *Logos* contains a special section on Iraq with contributions by [Irene Gendzier](#), [Keith Watenpuagh](#), [Wadood Hamad](#), [Stephen Eric Bronner](#) and [James Jennings](#). There is also a [conversation with Iraqi political scientists](#) conducted when I and others were visiting Baghdad on a fact-finding mission in January.

This issue also contains culture with photographs by [Robert Haller](#), a play by [Ilja Richter](#) and one of the first English translations by the Romanian writer [Carmen Francesca Banciu](#). There are also original poems by [Adrienne Rich](#) and [Jim Cohn](#) among so many other items. We hope that this issue of *Logos* will be able to stimulate thought and reflection and enhance the moral outlook of its readers.

A Conversation Between American and Iraqi Intellectuals
Baghdad, Iraq – January 16th, 2003

The following discussion took place between several American academics and professors from the College of Political Science at Baghdad University on January 16th, 2003. The invitation for the discussion was made by several senior faculty members of the College and was held without the supervision of Baathist party cadres. The Americans were Stephen Eric Bronner of Rutgers University, Anne Burns, Kurt Jacobsen from the University of Chicago, Michael Thompson from CUNY and the editor of *Logos* as well as Richard Couto, Antioch University and Dusan Bjelic from University of Southern Maine. The names of the Iraqis that participated have been withheld to avoid any form of political reprisal.

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Kurt Jacobsen: There is a point that Colin Powell brought out, when he was asked by the press, persistently asked by the press over the last couple of weeks, “why don’t you release this secret information if you have it?” And he said again, “we don’t know if we can trust Blix,” he didn’t say Blix explicitly, but he said basically we don’t know if we can trust the inspectors to leak the information in some inadvertent way to the Iraqi government, so that they can re-conceal information. That’s the sort of conundrum you’re in, now that also depends on whether or not the information is real—it might be, it might not be.

Iraqi Professor #1: I am just trying to seek the truth. So, correct me if I’m wrong. I remember when someone—I think it was Clinton—accused Iraq or Saddam, of trying to assassinate ex-president Bush in Kuwait. Incidentally, I happened to be outside Iraq at the time and saw a program on CNN with some military expert, and he said that all the evidence was given that certain samples of explosives, which are uniquely used by the Iraqi army, were used in Kuwait and he said: now, I can give you addresses of places in Europe and Washington, from whom you can buy these same explosives and from certain shops. The reporter said to him, don’t you think by doing that, by divulging

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that information don't you think you are defending a dictator against your own democratically elected president, he said I have nothing to do with Iraq or Saddam, what I care is that the White House should not spread lies

Stephen Eric Bronner: I think there is a simple way out, despite the conundrums. It's the United Nations that is supposed to making determined action, not the United States. I mean, that would be the first... It would be incumbent upon the United States to open all it's information for independent confirmation or skepticism, then we would know he either has it or doesn't. Certainly what Kurt said is correct. There is something, I think, important to note and that is there is a certain tradition of this in American politics, going back to Senator Joseph McCarthy, after the war, "I have here a list of Communists, but we're not going to show you what's on the list." Or, I have here, as in the case of Vietnam, we have information we don't have, but we're not going to show it to you. You are going to have to trust us. This is an anti-democratic procedure.

Iraqi Professor #1: I'd like to make two points concerning Iraq, which I know intimately. The first is this, and I don't think the regime would like it to be spread: the people are saying now, especially Arab thinkers outside Iraq, that Bush has chosen Iraq because it is an easy target. People are fed up with the sanctions and they are dehumanized and after the Iraqis resigned to liquidate their non-conventional arms, they are not as strong of a military force as they once were. And this is in fact the case when compared with the situation with North Korea in which you have a defying force, but defying the U.S. every twelve or every twenty-four hours with a new resolution.

And the other point which I want to raise is that I think most Iraqis—I don't know about the leadership, however—would like to see this country go through a peaceful transition of at least a quarter of a century, so that we could reach the living standards we had achieved by 1989. The quality of education is catastrophic; salaries are extremely low; so I don't think that it is true that Iraq is a threat, perhaps the Iraqi leadership because of reasons of dignity, especially dignity in an Arab sense wouldn't admit this much, but I don't think we do pose a threat to our neighbors and reconciliation in Iraq of, say, the Kurdish problem would help in achieving more peace. So what puzzles me is why the American administration doesn't take a constructive line toward the problem of Iraq by removing the sanctions, which—are readily admitted by even by the most Americans—is hurting innocent civilians much more than it is hurting the President Saddam or the

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government. And secondly, why shouldn't they put some kind of indirect pressure for sorting out the Kurdish problem, for moving toward democratic transformation. Recently I met with some Libyan journalist and I said: look, there are things which are included in the term of sovereignty such as "regime change" or, especially, if, as the Americans have done, you support a certain opposition group and see them as the establishment. This is a violation of our sovereignty, but I don't think the insistence of human rights and the respect of human rights by the world community is a violation of national sovereignty, otherwise it is clear we are saying that any regime can torture people till they die and other nations should do nothing.

Iraqi Professor #2: I would like to point out to you, through some European cases, three examples in which the U.S. helped direct nations toward democracy without military aggression, without war. Those of Greece, Spain after Franco and Portugal after Salazar. The U.S. put the condition that they could not join the common market, or European market, unless they were democratic, and I as an Iraqi and as a Muslim who respects the sovereignty of Turkey, I think that if it wasn't for the European pressure, the Turkish government might very well have executed Ocalem and this would have created a great danger to Turkey itself because the Kurds would have fought for revenge, so the Turks were being helped through indirect pressures to move toward democracy. Why doesn't the U.S. adopt the same policy toward this poor miserable country which you have played a role in destroying and have played as much of a role in providing biological and chemical weapons—I assure you, I cannot say I promise or I swear, that all such weapons and the means to produce them came initially from the U.S., not a single one came from the Soviet Union or a socialist country.

But in the future even if the Americans, I mean the American army, even if they achieve certain victories in the first phases of any invasion, later on they will pay a high price because this country is full of problems; and some of its problems are related to regional instability. And I will say this, and I do not mind since I have written it in an open letter here in Iraq, I said if the Kurds would like to have an independent state, let them have a separate nation but if the Kurds have a separate state, I think Turkey would be against them. If Turkey was involved against them the Iranians would be involved against Turkey, and U.S. domination and so would Syria. So it would cause series of problems for both for the U.S. It is not necessary for America to create all these problems. You speak about the Shiites, but they are, I confess there is no method of knowing Shi'a opinion, but my impression from the streets is

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when we're in Lebanon rather than for Mr. Chalabi who is highly respected by the American lobby, and by American Congressmen. I think if the Shi'as were to vote in Iran they would vote 90 percent against Chalabi. But as for the future of Iraq, it looks to me as if there is no one truly informed in America, or in the West in general, these days. You don't have President de Gaulle, you don't have a Kennedy, or even an Eisenhower and his attitude in 1956, when he opposed the English and the French. I admit that Arab leaders are typically no better, they are simply following the course of events and they usually don't know what to do, but is it good for you to lack such informed leaders?

Kurt Jacobser. Well, one difference between the mid-90s situation that I just described and the current situation is that war was not imminent, now it is, and that is the reason why Steve's recommendation this should go to the UN to arbitrate is absolutely imperative.

Stephen Eric Bronner. We think, I mean maybe me, but I don't think there is anything that you've said, that anybody in this room would really disagree with.

Kurt Jacobser. There is nothing that you've said that I think factions within the Bush administration would not agree with.

Stephen Eric Bronner. Our problem is that just, quite frankly, that there's been a climate of nationalism that's been generated since September 11th and a constriction of civil liberties at home. This is something that is rarely discussed with regard to Iraq, but it's really a question of American self-interest as well. There's been a constriction of discourse in America. There's been a constriction of dissent, but there's great hope that there will be a change, that there will be support for not going to war and for recognizing the consequences. Actually today, there's a big demonstration and there should be a huge set of demonstrations in Washington and around the country.

Kurt Jacobser. In Europe too, I was at a demonstration with 400,000 in London. There were several hundred thousand in Washington in September. One of the reports in the Washington Post we read last night on the internet was that 60percent of the American people would back an invasion of Iraq, but the subtext of that and it should be screamingly apparent is that once you say American ground troops go into Iraq, it's 42percent, once you say

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Americans take casualties, it's 30percent. It's not just a question of pragmatics, many Americans have moral qualms over the legality of what's going on. There is a great deal of apprehension, a great deal of doubt that is becoming mobilized right now.

Iraqi Professor #1: I thank you for this information, but somehow I am aware of all that you have said. I would like to confess what worries me when I think of an Anglo-American invasion of this country taking place. Within one year or two, perhaps more, the current American and English administration would be finished, because they would be really trapped in a so-called Iraqi crossfire. Being an Iraqi I wouldn't like to contribute to civilization and a more democratic and open regime in Europe and America at our expense because there would be too many sacrifices—now I am a father, perhaps when I was twenty I wouldn't have spoken this way, but we don't want to give sacrifices for really nothing.

Kurt Jacobsen: You are speaking to a generation that remembers Vietnam very vividly and we speak out against all the horrors and atrocities.

Stephen Eric Bronner: And as you pointed out before, we also come from an era where we understood that government lied and manipulated public opinion.

Dusan Bjelic: It doesn't really matter to the United States whether they have a rational explanation or not, what interests them is a temporary pragmatic solution to their problems and their interests, whether you agree rationally or not. But your strategy here should be to counter that and go ahead of the game, so to speak, and articulate an indigenous solution. In that case, the United States could respond to your indigenous movement which in a sense parallels the case of Yugoslavia when there was the creation of the student resistance movement. Then, only then, did the demonstrations take a positive attitude to the extent that they actually stopped talking to Milosovic. They stopped pressing them militarily; instead, they set up two agencies to try to help the movement, to give some sense how to develop this grass roots movement and prepare for an election and how to talk about the future, how to be proactive. So when you take proactive position that seems to be the only way in which administration can respond because the fact is—I know some people close to the administration—they don't know what they want, they want something, but they don't know exactly what.

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If you know how to come up with the proactive solution, or offer, or commitment to something that you can actually use the pressure for your benefit. What I want to ask you is this: what do you see as a possible offer or vision in which you can take some kind of proactive action here and now?

Iraqi Professor #1: I accept your argument, but I think the situation in Iraq is extremely different from that in Yugoslavia. I know that Milosovic was a hard person but I think the President of Iraq, Saddam, is in full control of the situation, so I think it is difficult to compare him to Milosevic. That's one thing that makes such a task very difficult, and secondly—and I don't want to hurt your feelings—but American policy in the area and the kind of opposition groups they support are hardly positive for this country. Again, I don't want to be rude to anyone, but Mr. Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress is an MIT graduate, he is very good at computerizing and he was involved with embezzling from the Petra Bank in Jordan. What I am saying is that when you find such a person supported by the American administration as the next leader of Iraq, we start thinking that the Americans are not interested in any viable solution for this country because he will not be accepted by the public here.

Now, my solution—and I was intending to speak yesterday and to salute Bianca Jagger—I think it is our responsibility to reach a peaceful conclusion with our brethren, the Kurds in the North of Iraq, and I will go further to say that the situation in the South of Iraq, where the Shi'a are living, is not as good as it should be and if you ask me who is responsible for that I will say that it is the regime, it is the present leadership, and I say this openly, even to the leadership because it is supposed to be the father of this country, so you don't blame a child for being slightly wicked, you blame the father for not raising his children in an acceptable way. I was telling an Iraqi friend yesterday that if Iraq was easily penetrated it would be the fault of our government who did not achieve reconciliation within the country so that Iraq would be unified, reconciled and united.

But as to the question of whether or not an opposition could come out of Iraq from the circumstances of encouraging civil strife, of encouraging civil war, this is simply impossible because President Saddam is much stronger and the political system is different from the one Milosovic was involved with. Secondly, because the Americans, at least of the present administration, have adopted the wrong course to submit to the Iraqi people. This American administration does not like opposition and the opposition groups they have

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shown some favor to have difficulties even among themselves; I can't see them ruling the country for a very long time. This is why I predict, and perhaps I am wrong, that in the initial phases of the armed conflict perhaps Iraq would be weak, but afterward the resistance would grow against the American invasion and the puppet regime they would like to place in this country. But had the American government since 1991 adopted a policy of saying, "look the sanctions are hurting, any collective punishment is wrong, by having measures and by objective law we are punishing innocent people for something that was done by someone who did not consult the population," things may have been different. The impression given in this country is that the American administration is interested in demoralizing this country to the extent that they will accept any terms dictated by the puppet regime or by American influence.

Well, you might ask why, why they have treated, say, Yugoslavia in a different way than that of Iraq? I think there is an essential mistake in the American policy that all Arab regimes should be weaker than Israel, and this point was not raised in the discussion which I attended because I think some of the Americans were courteous to the Iraqis and the Iraqis were also courteous to the Americans; but if we really want to solve these problems, we have to open them up and address them openly. I think there is a different American policy in Iraq because they want Iraq to be very weak so that Israel can be stronger than all Arab states. I wouldn't question the legality of the American attitude in preserving proper Israel, I can understand that attitude. In fact, most Arabs now distinguish between the Israel of 1948 and the Israel of 1967, but without complete Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 borders and the formation of a Palestinian state, and full Arab-Jewish co-existence—and by this I mean peaceful co-existence—you will continue to have a threat of imbalance in the region. This a problem which you have yet to confront. It is true that Americans encouraged the development of Japan, of Germany, even South Korea, but their force in the Arab region is completely different. Here, they always had to suppress attempts at industrialization.

Stephen Eric Bronner: . . . and democracy. . .

Iraqi Professor #1: . . . and democracy. And those that they did support, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are in a funny situation—they don't know what to do, just because ten Saudis were supporters of Osama bin Laden, they are now putting the Saudis in a very awkward position, because the Saudi regime lives on the support of America. So, there must be a change. Also, I should

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say that I am for *gradual* change, but *genuine, authentic, democratic* changes in this country. I am for national reconciliation. I will tell you openly, I still feel guilty about Iraqi behavior in and toward Kuwait; it was not necessary and it was immoral. But when I see the American policy of perpetuating continued starvation for Iraqis, preventing them from advancing technologically and develop politically especially in terms of democracy, in actual fact, by bringing people into this country from the outside, who are not accepted—such as these American-sponsored opposition groups—well, I will be very reluctant to support an opposition which would bypass the regime and have dialogue with the American administration. I wouldn't mind having a dialogue with you, or with those gentlemen, because you are academics and this is what academics do. But I would be very reluctant to have a dialogue with such a hostile American administration especially when there are many who do not have the interests of the Iraqi people at heart.

Iraqi Professor #2. But if you want to solve the main problem, first we have to reach some kind of understanding and solution for the Arab-Israeli dispute. At least in the way that my colleague has put it, in a way that is acceptable for everybody. And second, we have be sure that both the Iranians and the Turks will never try to put their hands on Iraq. There are many disputes that persist between Iraq, the Iranians and the Turks. So the question remains: how do you find the solution?

Anne Burns. Can I just say one thing? The desperation of the situation is urgent right now due to the possibility of bombing, and you have mentioned the Israeli problem several times, that it is part of the bigger problem and Iraq, being in a position right now to do something, can stop the bombing. Don't you think the Iraqis should somehow try to talk to Israel through an organization like Peace Now? If you made that attempt it would make Iraq look much better, and I've found that people here in Iraq don't even know what Peace Now is. I mean, for the Iraqis to approach Israel through Peace Now would make you look fantastic. And the Americans would have to stop and reconsider many of their plans.

Iraqi Professor #1: I think this is how it should be: the Israelis and the Iraqis could have some kind of dialogue. I would dare to suggest that the Iraqi regime would accept that. But for the time being under threat of American aggression and of Sharon's policies of complete occupation, Saddam would lose all his cards if he accepted what you are saying. For us, as individuals, I agree with you. In fact, when I was in England I used to invite Israelis—

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many were left-wing Israelis—to many meetings and conferences on this topic. And I tell you in all honesty that they were speaking for the Arab cause much more persuasively and eloquently than the Arabs simply because they were aware of past events, of the history. And now there is a new trend even among the Israeli historians. I've read in the *London Review of Books* and the *New York Review of Books* about those who are handling the problem in an objective, or near objective way, and also about Daniel Barenboim working with Edward Said. I mean, this sort of dialogue I do support. But obviously you ought to see the Iraqi point of view. If we were to invite an Israeli Jew to debate a right wing Zionist, and if he was not able to make a persuasive case in that scenario, we would be in a difficult situation because he was supposed to represent the other side of the debate, the *progressive* side. Otherwise it would look like we were naively pro-Israel and that, even through we are pro-peace, that we were selling out the country. So what I'm saying is that if we were to meet with Israelis, they would have to be very well-known people.

Kurt Jacobsen. That is precisely Anne's point. She wasn't recommending that Saddam go to Peace Now, but that organizations, lower-level, non-government organizations, make some kind of contact.

Stephen Eric Bronner. Or maybe universities could find some professors.

Kurt Jacobsen. We simply don't know if it's possible.

Anne Burns. It's on everyone's mind, every Iraqi academic we have spoken to. To make some kind of approach as academics to an organization like Peace Now would be a very progressive step.

Iraqi Professor #1: I think what you are saying is right, the cause seems absolutely right, and Iraqis are not accustomed to this logic. But, I will tell you one thing: did President Saddam—and I will defend him on this point—or any Iraqi, condemn Yassar Arafat because he is negotiating with the Israelis? We saw Arafat at the London conference speaking via satellite, which Sharon prevented him from going to, and is about the Palestinian government, and I think it is good for them because, after all, the Palestinian or Israeli problems are not going to be sorted out by a nuclear war, or by a new Saladin. This is a nuclear age, it is incredibly sorted out, but only by organizing two states, at least for the time being, and there through perhaps democratic interchange we might speak of a unified Israel or Palestine.

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But I think the Iraqis are not accustomed to this logic, but you should notice there is no criticism of opening up dialogues between Israelis and Arabs, especially the Palestinians, which is an important step. And this is why I told you that now the Arabs are becoming more accepting of the distinction between the Palestine of 1948 and the Palestine of 1967, they would be happy to support a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders, but only a *genuine state*, not a, what is the term?

Stephen Eric Bronner: . . . a greater Israel. . .

Iraqi Professor #1: . . . yes, that would be a positive step, one which is good. But I think for Saddam, who is a politician, rather than an intellectual, I do not think he would be accepting of this if, under American hostility, he gave his hand to any Israeli because the Arab masses don't know about Peace Now, or the "refusniks" or any other leftist and progressive groups within Israel. But we don't have any contacts, the Israelis know a lot about us from some books on Iraq or Syria and I am always impressed by their sources, but we are not equal to them in this regard.

Stephen Eric Bronner: I think then that this needs to be done using non-governmental organizations, I think this is Anne's point. This is fully understandable what you said about president Saddam, but I think, as much as possible, this would be in your interest as academics and as Iraqi patriots to try as much as possible to build ties and there really are people, by the way I would go one step further, I think that there is a far greater lack of unity among Israeli Jews than among American Jews. So, when you think of Peace Now, for example, I mean that really, even at its lowest point, had 25 to 30 percent of the population behind it, at its *lowest* point, and it's probably up to forty percent now. That is significant for a non-governmental actor. Among American Jews, I think it is even more important, because there is such a hegemony of Zionist organizers to try and build connections with American Jews.

Kurt Jacobsen: If it's possible again, we don't know how difficult it may be to reach out to non-governmental groups to an organization like Peace Now, but if it's possible to do so it would send out an enormous message that the democratic nucleus here has great potential, and for which your scenario of a twenty-five year democratic transition would then become extremely plausible and would undermine the argument of people that we should simply go in and crush the regime and not give a damn about the collateral

damage, the tens or hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed. Those kinds of things do have an impact on public opinion.

Richard Couto: Another reason to bring about dialogue between Iraqis and groups such as Peace Now is that this would be a message with a subtext, one that says that there is hope or a peaceful resolution of differences between Palestine and Israel. This means that Steve's point is essential: that if in fact there were soon to be an initiative of Iraqis in dialogue with an NGO, within Israel, you'd be saying to Americans there are Iraqis who are presently thinking in non-military terms.

Iraqi Professor #1: Yes, but this somehow indicates a counterpoint, because we don't know a lot about American internal policies, but we know that the present administration is a pro-Zionist one. This confirms the other point that somehow the American administration is moving toward a pro-Israeli policy, rather than fostering pro-American, democratic relations within the Middle East. So you see the difficulty, I heard about this book by Bob Woodward, but I haven't received a copy of it.

When I speak with other Iraqis about an opposition ending the regime, many points are raised. I say that what distinguishes human beings from animals is *dialogue*, human beings have dialogue. So if we continue to run into civil strife and have political revenge, then we are not human beings. So why not have civil dialogue with Israelis who support Palestinian lives and socialize with the Israeli government? But I have to admit, we seriously lack information about Israel. The first time I heard about Peace Now in a serious way, is from you, I thought it was just not an important movement. I will tell you one thing, when we suggested this meeting to those who knew about your delegation, one of them mentioned that some of them are Jewish, and immediately I said to him, "all the better" because we need this dialogue.

Michael Thompson: I'd like to bring something else up. I mean when we're talking about Israel, the situation is obviously important, but I think dissecting the imperatives of the Bush Administration with respect to Iraq is of essential importance. The situation is imminent right now and I think that there has to be some understanding that one of the reasons in the United States that the Bush Administration has been so consistent on aggression in Iraq is that, in one sense, there is the political aspect of Israel's security and regional stability, but there also is the issue of oil. There is an economic dimension to all of this that we've been ignoring. I'm not being an economic

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determinist here—what I am saying is that the global political economy of oil is such that certain political measures will be chosen. I think it's true that this is one reason that Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries have been the object of political control by the United States for so long. Look, Israel is an important issue, but the oil is as well and the complexities of this situation need to be discussed because there's a lot of misconceptions—especially on the left in the West—about it.

Iraqi Professor #1: This point has been on my mind. You see in a situation of ignorance acclimated by political dictatorship and by the current system and that sort of thing and also encouraged unfortunately by the Western powers, it is difficult to have such detailed discussions. Speaking about the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* I don't think there is a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world because I know Arabs and Jews who are very good human beings and they have discussions and they have disputes, as you said. But I'll tell you, a lot of people are deeply influenced by conspiracy theories and their incorrect perceptions of history. And some of those people are Iraqis in Baghdad, but one thing I would like to mention is that I think that there is some sort of conspiracy of silence against the rational, democratic Iraqi opposition.

The key problem is that there is a critical discourse here and there, but it is not published. So on both sides we are not listened to. When you speak about opposition, you speak about Ahmad Chalabi, you speak about all sorts of people who in fact are recognized as "opposition" even by *Newsweek*. Surely, this sort of dialogue might open our minds, but we are mistaken if we think it is going to change anything here. And anyhow, I agree with your friend, public opinion doesn't change policy in any country or in most countries. But public dialogue, like ours, is going to have implications for academic freedom, for discussion...

Iraqi Professor #2: I also wanted to go back to this issue of the oil. Certainly, Iraq has lot's of oil, but this does not seem a good pretext for war. I mean, with all of this oil we have, we're not going to drink it—if the Americans want oil, we are willing to sit down with them and sell it at a fair price.

Michael Thompson: Well, I've heard this before from some of your colleagues, but I think there is a crucial element here that you may be missing. I mean, one thing that they really don't want is a free market on oil. With the rapid economic development of the Asian-Pacific region, for example—China particularly—there is a feeling, I think, on the part of the current

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administration that some degree of control over the flow of oil from the region is essential. When you have a free market, a *true* free market, one can always be outbid—that's something they don't want.

Dusan Bjelic. Very briefly, I want to go back to focusing on the possibility of doing something. You might also consider actually finding some Palestinian intellectuals who are already in dialogue with Israelis and join them. If you can establish some form of resistance then you are recognized as a human being. If you can bring you know this kind of Palestinians, Iraqis, and Israelis that creates new dynamics and then there is a different rhythm of the whole game.

Stephen Eric Bronner. I'm Jewish, and I can tell you that there are a lot of American Jews who are not supportive of Sharon and not supportive of Israeli policies and in the same way we draw a distinction between the Iraqi regime and the Iraqi people that has to be done here too. I think there are many misconceptions from what I've heard. There are really deep misconceptions about the role of Jews in American life and unfortunately an underestimation of their impact, American Jews, on Israel. It's a key matter that in some way the connection of the establishment to progressive Jews in the States and Israel. Because in all truth, your representation in America, and this is also true of the Palestinians, is terrible. The people you send there, the whole government and the way they present themselves; I said to you before, if you were on American TV, the whole perspective of the Iraqi situation would be different.

Dusan Bjelic. Let me just ask you, do you feel free to talk to the CNN?

Iraqi Professor #1: Well I would have to think about it. I'll tell you, while I was a student in England I had contacts with Israeli student groups and it was me who initiated contact. I saw their newsletter, wrote to them, and then I became President of the Union of Arab Students. On two very important occasions at our annual conferences we presented an Israeli speaker at the introduction of the conference. No one opposed this step. I did consider it a political risk and in fact I think it was. But since I came back to Iraq the whole question became moot because we don't have non-governmental organizations, but I wouldn't mind having a dialogue with Israelis who are reasonable and who are responsible even who care for their security but who also consider the Palestinians as human beings.

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Iraqi Professor #2: Well I will tell you one thing, there was a meeting at an intellectual center run by the government and it openly raised two points. First, that to talk now about the Palestine of 1948 is irrational and irresponsible and it would strengthen the position of extremist Zionists for while weakening the Palestinian cause of achieving a state within the 1967 borders. I said this in front of a government organization and everything. I said I totally respect people who sacrifice their life for what they believe, I am astonished, but is the suicidal operations inside Israel proper helping the Palestinian cause or hurting it? I think we should consider this matter because I haven't reached a conclusion. You see, unfortunately, the Zionists don't leave the Palestinians any cards, any room, for maneuvering and their only and last option is martyrdom. You call it terrorism, you are entitled to your view. So is it good to deprive them of the means for life but at the same time you have to ask the question: is it right to kill civilians even in a war? Isn't this alienating peaceful Israelis? We are aware of their presence, perhaps not in full detail, but I am of the opinion that says the Palestinians should declare a truce even from one side for say one year. They should declare that they will not exercise suicidal attacks inside or outside Israel, but on the condition that if the Israelis met within a certain period of time, that would be fine.

Stephen Eric Bronner: Well, I think that Edward Said literally changed the perspective of the way things were seen when he came out and said what Palestine needs is a Nelson Mandela. I mean, that was just a brilliant formulation.

Iraqi Professor #1: Yes, because some Zionist groups feel that this means the end of the Jewish state. So perhaps it is not acceptable for them to hear that there is need of a Nelson Mandela.

Stephen Eric Bronner: Let me be clear. What he meant was a change of tactics and a person who would project a moral persona, in a way that hasn't been done on American television. This is something—and I mean this with all due respect—this is something that is underestimated in the Arab world. There is a sense here that when you speak to us, there is very little to say we agree with you. The question is how you portray this and particularly how you portray this to people who really don't know. Now, if you just come out and give facts, in America, for example, if you speak about the Zionist enemy, that would immediately be rejected. Just in terms of the skeptics, before you even said another word everything else would be rejected not simply because it's true or not true, it would be because you used a term,

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“Zionist enemy,” in a place where this has a different meaning—not just among Jews, but among non-Jews as well.

I think there has to be a base of interchange. You can criticize Israel, radically, which I do, without subscribing to the idea that by criticizing the state you are somehow also anti-semitic. What I found with many Iraqis is literally acceptance of the idea that Judaism and the state of Israel are the same and this creates false strategies.

Kurt Jacobsen. To symbolize the problem with an example from yesterday, we went to Babylon University and witnessed a demonstration. The chant was, we were told by a friend of ours who speaks Arabic, despite “we want peace, we want peace” another chant was “Saddam is Iraq, Iraq is Saddam.” The message we discovered is that many people have the energy, and in this case it is self-defeating, against Sharon or Zionism, i.e., that Sharon is Israel, and Israel is Sharon which is a terrible pre-conception to begin with.

Dusan Bjelic. You have to think about how to build public forum and how to build consensus, which is a keep element to any democratic society. Your society and my society are very different, the history shows that the absence of this domain—the public sphere—was very detrimental to the political process because we always talk of things that changed resolutions and those that they didn’t. What changes things is building consensus and building consensus is often very docile growing thing to do. It doesn’t create healers. If you don’t have healers you don’t have leaders. You have everybody in charge and as long as you have everybody, as long you have consensus then the soul sleeps. When you lose consensus somebody has to keep order. If you cannot rule yourself, somebody else has to. So you have to think about how you can open this sphere in which you can actually talk about things, not against the regime in terms of the content, but in terms of effects of creating a public sphere in the long-run which can bring processes of change, and I think that is something that you as a political scientist have to think about, even in your classes, to kind of promote a public sphere.

Iraqi Professor #1: In this country, people have often said we don’t want a mere country, we want a homeland in which Arabs, Kurds, Turks, Christians of different nationality rather than Arab, Muslims, and Shii and Sunnis, Jews, and Christians should live as equal peoples. When this consensus is achieved without necessarily defying the regime, this consensus will impose itself, in some form or another—perhaps not in my lifetime, perhaps in a few days, I

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just don't know—will impose itself as a political reality. I agree with you, but I would like also to warn against a kind of populism. Once in Jordan, I was there and heard some people talking about the Oslo agreement, which Arafat signed with Rabin and I just wanted to go there, the speakers themselves were not particularly important, and see how an Arab audience and Arab speakers could have conflict on such an important issue and what the reaction would be in the audience; and, you know, it was tremendous, it was better than a debate in England or even in America.

Irene Gendzier

Dying to Forget: the U.S. and Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction

by
Irene Gendzier

Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction is the Bush administration's most consistently cited justification for going to war against Saddam Hussein, a war whose purpose is additionally rationalized in regional and global terms. Citing the President's State of the Union address, former CIA officer Kenneth M. Pollack observed that it was "important that the president argued that Saddam's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction creates a threat to the entire region and is a human rights catastrophe."¹

Few would argue that weapons of mass destruction constitute a threat, that their use has catastrophic effects, or that the Iraqi leader sought to acquire them. But how many recall that Presidents Reagan and Bush played critical roles in providing Saddam Hussein with the means to create such weapons? And how many remember that such policies were an integral part of U.S.-Iraqi relations in the 1980s, when major U.S. corporations—with prominent political assistance—were uncritical advocates of a U.S.-Iraqi connection? The evidence is available in press reports, in televised discussions, in hearings held in the U.S. Senate and House in the early 1990s, and in parallel inquiries conducted in London, with their ample references to U.S. policies.

Yet, for the most part, these events and the evidence they brought forth are vaguely familiar but often viewed as dated. They belong to the past, some argue, as though that past had no bearing on this present.

In the political logic that dominated U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in the 1980s and earlier, military preemption was a permanent option. National security documents left no doubt that access to the region's oil resources was considered a central objective of U.S. policy. Its implementation assumed the existence of a reliable network of regional allies,

paid and prepared to carry out U.S. policies. The 1979 fall of the Shah of Iran undermined one of the pillars of that network. U.S. policy in its aftermath focused on compensating for this loss. Saddam Hussein was to be one of the two anchors replacing Iran, the other being Saudi Arabia, a long time “reliable” ally of the U.S. Israel’s place in U.S. calculations was not neglected. Jerusalem viewed Tehran under the Ayatollah much as did Washington, which did not prevent Israel or the U.S. dealing with Iran, as the revelations of the Iran/Contra affair later disclosed.

Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the conditions that led U.S. Marines to subsequently leave Beirut was viewed in Washington and Jerusalem as an unacceptable victory for Syria and Iran’s allies in southern Lebanon. Donald Rumsfeld was on the scene. His subsequent visit to Baghdad, as special U.S. envoy, emerged out of this scenario. It followed President Reagan’s decision to remove Iraq from the list of nations supporting international terrorism, which, in turn, opened the door to closer military and intelligence cooperation. Crucial to Reagan’s turn toward Iraq was the willingness of U.S. allies in the region to act as third party conduits for the transmission of U.S. military and intelligence data to Baghdad. After the Iran-Iraq war, the U.S.-Iraqi military connection did not stop; it continued until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

There were other forms of U.S. assistance to Baghdad in this period that contributed to the military enhancement of Iraq. Between 1985 and 1990, according to Congressman Henry Gonzalez of Texas, “the Reagan and Bush Administrations approved 771 export licenses for Iraq—239 of these approvals came from the Bush Administration. Much of the equipment shipped to Iraq under these licenses ended up enhancing Iraq’s military capability . . .”² An estimate prepared by the CIA indicates that \$4.7 billion was extended in credit guarantees by the CCC (Commodity Credit Corporation) between 1983 and 1990 (\$2.6 billion of which was authorized in the first thirty months of the Bush administration) had transformed Iraq into the largest Middle Eastern market for U.S. agricultural produce (which represented a massive 85 percent of all U.S. sales to Iraq), enabling Iraq to divert funds needed for its military industrialization drive.”³ Playing a crucial role in the extension of credit to Iraq was the Atlanta, Georgia, branch of the Italian BNL (Banca Nazionale del Lavoro), which granted additional extra-generous sums to Baghdad, and was eventually the subject of a magnum U.S. investigation.

Iraq's domestic politics, the repressive nature of its regime, and the evidence of human rights atrocities in no way impeded Washington's relations with the regime. Nor did it prevent a delegation of U.S. Senators from visiting the Iraqi leader in 1990 with then President Bush's approval. Western military and intelligence which went to Iran, but in far more significant quantity to Iraq, did not cease with the knowledge of Saddam Hussein's human rights abuses. The change in U.S. and Western policies came only with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which set Washington's preemptive doctrine into operation, albeit with the benefit of a UN cover.

Without reviewing Iraq's political history, it is useful to recall that in the period of 1971-75, Iraq relied heavily on military support from the former U.S.S.R., after which its sources diversified and came to include France, Italy, Switzerland and Belgium, West Germany, Chile, the U.K. and the U.S. The role of German companies in supplying Iraq with the means necessary for the production of chemical weapons including poison gas, as well as other forms of military technology, has been documented.⁴ Between 1987 and 1990, the U.K. sent Iraq "an entire inventory of military and militarily useful equipment,"⁵ which was the subject of the Scott Inquiry, which incidentally disclosed U.S. connections. The findings of that inquiry were published in 1996. In the interim, in 1990, 1992 and subsequently, U.S. Congressional hearings and reports, some of which involved continuing investigations into U.S.-Iraqi policies and their health impact on U.S. Gulf War Veterans and their families, revealed the nature and extent of U.S. support for Iraq, as well as the efforts of previous administrations to block such inquiries.

The material that follows is incomplete. The record is richer and the findings of contemporary researchers are yet to be considered. In the interval, the evidence offered may serve as an introduction.

On October 2, 2002, the American Gulf War Veterans Association (AGWVA) issued a statement calling for the resignation of the U.S. Secretary of Defense. The reason for this action was his denial of knowledge concerning the past U.S. shipment of biological weapons to Iraq. "If our Secretary of Defense is unaware of the sales of biological materials to a country with which we are about to go to war, or if he is in denial over the fact that these sales occurred, the AGWVA believes that he represents a clear and present danger to the lives of our military, our country, and the American people, and should be considered a very serious threat to the

national security. It is for this reason that the AGWVA calls for his resignation and removal from office.”⁶

Two months later, the Iraqi government presented its voluminous report on weapons to the UN Security Council. UN officials let it be known that they would not disclose names of foreign companies that had supplied Iraq with weapons. At the same time, U.S. efforts to sanitize the document, justified for reasons of international security, failed to keep data relevant to foreign companies that dealt with Saddam Hussein out of the public eye. The information was leaked to a German paper that identified 150 U.S., British, German and French companies that had done business in conventional and non-conventional weapons with Iraq. The information, appearing in *Die Tageszeitung* in Berlin, was immediately reported in *The Independent*, (“Leaked Report Says German and U.S. Firms Supplied Arms to Saddam,” Dec.18, 2002, London), which disclosed that “eighty German firms and 24 U.S. companies are reported to have supplied Iraq with equipment and know-how for its weapons programs from 1975 onwards and in some cases support for Baghdad’s conventional program had continued until last year.” The list included corporations involved in the production of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as rockets and missiles, such as: Honeywell, Spektra Physics, Semetex, TI Coating, UNISYS, Sperry Corp., Tektronix, Rockwell, Leybold Vacuum Systems, Finnifan-MAT-US, Hewlett Packard, Dupont, Eastman Kodak, Bechtel, International Computer Systems, American Type Culture Collection, Consarc, and others. *Die Tageszeitung* disclosed that “these companies are shown to have supplied entire complexes, building elements, basic materials and technical know-how for Saddam Hussein’s program to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction,” and with these, “rockets and complete conventional weapons systems.”

At the same time that the Iraqi report was leaked, U.S. media reports disclosed elements of past U.S. policy toward Iraqi, notably with attention paid to chemical weapons. In late December 2002, *The Washington Post* published a wide-ranging review of U.S. policy in support of Saddam Hussein under the Reagan and Bush administrations, while citing evidence of U.S. complicity in directly and indirectly refurbishing Iraq’s armament program. The news reiterated the position, confirmed by former officials in military intelligence and the National Security Council, that the knowledge of Iraq’s use of chemical weapons did not deter the Reagan or Bush

administrations from their policies of support. To those who justified them, reasons were not difficult to come by. They were embodied in Iran's post-1979 transformation and the fear which it inspired in Washington and throughout the capitals of U.S. allies in the Middle East.

In mid-August, *The New York Times* published an article on U.S. support for Iraq in the face of the latter's use of "mustard gas, sarin, VX and other poisonous agents." As one of the Pentagon sources quoted maintained, this was "just another way of killing people—whether with a bullet or phosgene, it didn't make any difference."

For those familiar with the case, there was earlier evidence. The American Gulf War Veterans' charges against the U.S. Secretary of Defense, cited above, were based on evidence that had been accruing since the early 1990s. That evidence came out of 1992 and later hearings held in the Senate under the Chairmanship of Donald Riegle. It investigated "U.S. Chemical and Biological Exports to Iraq and Their Possible Impact on the Health Consequences of the Persian Gulf War." Considered in conjunction with the hearings held under the Chairmanship of Representative Henry Gonzalez in the House Banking Committee, they implicated the Reagan and Bush administrations in Iraq's accumulation of weapons of mass destruction.

James J. Tuite III, Principle Investigator of the Riegle Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, disclosed that the U.S. "had exported chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile-system equipment to Iraq that was converted to military use in Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons program. Many of these weapons—weapons that the U.S. and other countries provided critical materials for—were used against us during the war."⁷

The Chair of the Senate Committee, Donald Riegle, concluded on the basis of his Committee's investigation, that "the U.S. government actually licensed the export of deadly microorganisms to Iraq." It was later learned that these microorganisms exported by the United States were identical to those the United Nations inspectors found and recovered from the Iraqi biological warfare capsulatum. Riegle's Committee listed other biological agents as well as the dates and addresses to which they were sent in Iraq, along with the symptoms they were known to produce.⁸ In addition, the Committee's findings indicated that "the Centers for Disease Control has compiled a listing of biological materials shipped to Iraq prior to the Gulf War. The

listing covers the period from October 1, 1984 (when the CDC began keeping records), through October 13, 1993. The following materials with biological warfare significance were shipped to Iraq during this period.”

The names of those listed included dates sent and addresses to which delivered. On the matter of nuclear weapons, Riegle’s Committee heard the testimony of Ted Jacobs, chief counsel of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs of the House Committee on Government Operations. On October 27, 1992, Jacobs addressed the question of export licenses of products destined for Iraq. He addressed the matter of evidence tampering, which Henry Gonzalez spelled out on CNN news the very same day, charging the Bush administration with attempting to do away with documentary evidence of loan guarantees to Iraq.

Meanwhile, in Riegle’s Committee, Jacobs confirmed that the Commerce Department “did indeed license materials which were later utilized by the Iraq regime for nuclear missile and chemical purposes.”⁹

Following Jacobs was David Kay, Secretary General of the Uranium Institute, former head of UN Weapons Inspection group in Iraq. Kay’s testimony included the following statement: “The simple answer to the question of whether U.S. produced equipment and technology has been found to be part of the Iraqi nuclear weapons program is yes. It was there. It was an essential part.” To this, Kay added: “The volume of U.S. produced equipment is not great when measured against the multi-billion dollar scale of the nuclear weapon program. On the other hand it was modern and it was essential to the Iraqi effort.

Gary Milhollin was another witness. Director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, he confirmed that “American equipment contributed vitally to the Iraq nuclear program, the missile program and the chemical program and I’m afraid I also believe that we knew that the risk was very high, if not certain that it would contribute when it was licensed.”

Millholin introduced other evidence relevant to nuclear weapons: mass spectrometers, he explained, were “used to measure the quality of nuclear weapon fuel as it’s being produced. There were two U.S. mass spectrometers in the Iraqi nuclear weapon program.” After referring to the training of Iraqi scientists in the U.S. in 1989, Millholin indicated that in his estimate,

Saddam Hussein would have been “close to making a bomb today with American machine tools,” had he not made the move to invade Kuwait.

On the same day on which they testified before the Committee, Millholin, spoke on public radio, (“All Things Considered,” NPR, Oct. 27, 1992), reporting on a “nuclear smuggler” who was known to have sent “strategic U.S. equipment straight into the Iraqi bomb and missile programs even after the Commerce Department is told that the export is going to help make military rockets.” As Millholin pointed out, there was a system that was designed to check such exports but it failed to work, most likely “undermined from the top.” The story was picked up by the mainstream press in the U.S. and abroad. In Washington, on the other hand, Republicans supportive of the administration charged partisan politics.

The investigation that yielded the evidence presented before the Riegle Committee had been in process for over a year. But some of it had been offered in prior testimony, as in the Foreign Relations Committee under Clairborne Pell that convened in June 1990.¹⁰

Its witnesses included U.S. Senators who charged the administration with violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, demanding to know why the U.S. conducted business with the Iraqi despot with an abysmal human rights record as the then U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, John Kelly, conceded. They wanted to know why the administration was importing Iraqi oil and offering Saddam Hussein credits to promote his purchases of U.S. products. Kelly’s response was straightforward. Commercial credits, in operation since 1983, were a matter of promoting good business since Iraq was the “largest [U.S.] export market for rice, which comprises 23 percent of total U.S. exports, for cattle, eggs, chickens, lumber, tobacco, and a variety of other agricultural products.” Kelly indicated that the U.S. had given Iraq “some \$500 million in credit guarantees,” in addition to that offered by the Ex-Im Bank.

And then there was the matter of strategic interest, Iraqi oil, and the questions of military assistance. On this, Kelly maintained that “we do not sell items on the munitions list to Iraq. We do not cooperate with Iraq’s nuclear program. An interagency committee reviews licensing requests on the Department of Commerce’s nuclear referral list and rejects all of those which it determines would contribute to Iraqi capabilities to develop nuclear weapons. All items on the missile technology control regime annexes are

reviewed for possible use in Iraq's missile program. Fifty chemicals are now on the list of CW precursors who export to Iraq and certain other countries is controlled."

At the time, Senator Jesse Helms challenged Kelly's account, pointing to the evidence provided by former Defense Department official, Stephen Bryen, who maintained that the U.S. and its allies had "been accomplices in the development and stockpiling of the Middle East major chemical warfare capability." Helms went on: "It's true for the development of germ warfare, ballistic missiles, potentially nuclear weapons." Further, Helms claimed that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta sent "some of the world's deadliest viruses to Iraq," among other states—including those of the former Communist bloc.

But it was not fear of the Communist bloc that inspired the Bush administration to issue a National Security Directive, signed several months after the above hearings. Nor could the war between Iran and Iraq be used to justify the U.S. position expressed in NSD-26. That document expressly stated that "normal relations between the United States and Iraq would serve our longer-term interests and promote stability in both the Gulf and the Middle East. The United States Government should propose economic and political incentives for Iraq to moderate its behavior and to increase our influence with Iraq. At the same time, the Iraqi leadership must understand that any illegal use of chemical and/or biological weapons will lead to economic and political sanctions, for which we would seek the broadest possible support from our allies and friends."¹¹

NSD-26 had considerably more to say about U.S.-Iraqi relations as well as about U.S. interests in the Gulf and the "security of key friendly states in the area [that] are vital to U.S. national security." That was defined in terms of "access to Persian Gulf Oil," which provided the foundation of the first Bush administration's policy toward Iraq, the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia. Iraq's role serves the same purpose in the second Bush administration, in a Middle East galaxy in which the Gulf has become all but an American military preserve, and in the eyes of some influential figures, Saudi Arabia's place is under review. In the larger political and military context in which oil interests operate, however, the recurrent pattern is one in which the alignment and manipulation of regional allies and foreign partners confront the legacy of past policies and the ongoing struggles to which they contribute.

Notes

¹Michael R. Gordon, "Bush Enlarges Case for War by Linking Iraq with Terrorists," *The New York Times*, Jan. 29, 2003, p. A11.

²Mark Phythian, *Arming Iraq*, Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1997, cited on p. 43.

³*Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴Jochen Hippler, "Iraq's Military Power: The German Connection," *Middle East Report*, January-February 1991, see references and in the more recent work of M. Phythian, *op. cit.*

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁶The statement appears on the AGWVA website: <http://www.gulfwarvets.com>

⁷James J. Tuite III, Committee Staff Report No. 3: Chemical Warfare Agent Identification, Chemical Injuries, and Other Findings. <http://www.chronicillnet.org/PGWS/tuite/chembio.htm>.

⁸The list can be found in ch.1 of the above report. It is reproduced at: <http://www.gulfweb.org/bigdoc/report/riegle1.html>.

⁹Oct. 27, 1992, Senate Banking Committee Hearing on U.S. Export Control Policy Toward Iraq Prior to 1990 Invasion of Kuwait, Donald Riegle (D-MI) Chair.

¹⁰Federal News Service, June 15, 1990. hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the subject of U.S.-Iraq Relations.

¹¹Mark Phythian, *Arming Iraq*, Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1997, p.41.

Keith D. Watenpaugh

The *Guiding Principles* and the U.S. “Mandate” for Iraq: 20th
Century Colonialism and America’s New Empire

by
Keith D. Watenpaugh

Late last year the Council on Foreign Relations invited 25 academics, corporate executives, oil industry consultants, retired military men and American diplomats to meet at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy on the oak-shaded campus of Rice University. Co-chaired by two former career foreign service officers, Edward P. Djerejian and Frank G. Wisner, the group was charged with mapping out a plan for the U.S.’s role in Iraq after the anticipated war. The final report which followed, *Guiding Principles for U.S. Post-Conflict Policy in Iraq*, outlines a 3-phased, at least 2-year process by which Iraq would be “liberated,” cleansed of Baathists and weapons of mass destruction and transformed into a democratic, free-market republic fully integrated into the community of nations. The authors of the report never challenge the wisdom of war on Iraq; rather their plan is built within the framework of what is presumably a “best case scenario”: a short and swift war with low casualties and relatively little urban warfare. The authors also concede that full compliance by the Iraqi state with relevant UN resolutions or a coup might eliminate the need for an invasion.

While the Council on Foreign Relations is adamant in its assertion that it has no affiliation with the U.S. government, the Baker Institute’s close association with the current administration suggests that the report itself will contribute to the shape of any post-war American occupation of Iraq. This is especially the case with the involvement of Djerejian, who served for much of the 1980s as ambassador in Damascus and Tel Aviv and has often been used to open back channel contacts in the Middle East and Caucasus. Djerejian is a careful and sanguine thinker who is deeply sensitive to the history and culture of the region; he understands intimately the explosive power of sectarian and ethnic conflict and how corrosive the asymmetries of American policies towards Israel have been. The report bears his unmistakable imprint in the way it envisions “quiet U.S.-Iranian cooperation,” notes that the

elimination of Saddam will not cure all the ills of Iraqi society and concludes that the U.S. “must avoid imposing Versailles-style conditions on Iraq.” (13)

By the same token, the report’s emphasis on the stabilization of Iraq’s oil industry—partially for the redevelopment of the country—and the use of American power to level “the playing field for awarding energy sector contracts by supporting a transparent and competitive process” (10) reflects the contribution of among others, Djerejian’s co-chair Frank Wisner. Wisner has had various jobs in the State and Defense Departments since the Vietnam era and most recently served as ambassador to New Delhi. He was appointed to the Board of Directors of the now-bankrupt Enron in 1997 and currently works as Vice Chairman of External Affairs for American International Group, one of the world’s largest insurance and financial services company. His involvement is a tacit acknowledgement that post-war Iraq policy is predicated less on disarmament or democratization and more on the interests of the American energy sector.

The report envisions a “superintending role” for the U.S. over a UN-supervised Iraqi administration:

One that maintains low visibility but is clearly committed to protecting law and order and creating a breathing space for a nascent Iraqi government to take shape. The U.S. role will be best played in the background guiding progress and making sure that any peacekeeping force is effective and robust enough to do its job...While moving the process along as quickly as possible, the United States must not be limited by self-imposed timelines, but should rather adopt an objectives-based approach (6)

The “behind the scenes” strategy of America’s efforts—which would be led by an “Iraqi Coordinator”—are calculated so as to preclude any appearance of colonialism. The anxiety over U.S. actions being interpreted as neo-imperialist courses through the document (“A heavy American hand will only convince them, and the rest of the world that the operation against Iraq was undertaken for imperialist, rather than disarmament. It is in America’s interest to discourage such misperceptions.” [10-11]). To counteract any “misperceptions” that might arise, the report’s authors advocate the use of “vigorous public diplomacy” not just in the Arab and Muslim worlds, but also in the U.S. and Europe to “deflate... local criticism in the region and

help deny terrorist and extremists the ability to use the military action to their own political advantage.”(3) “Public diplomacy” is a euphemism for highly coordinated pro-American propaganda that has gained wider use since the aftermath of 9/11 and the appointment of Charlotte Beers, a distinguished advertising executive as the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

The stress placed on issues of *appearance* and the borrowing of the vocabulary and personnel of Madison Avenue amounts to a concession that American plans for Iraq in the least resemble colonialism and at most constitute the formulation of a neo-modern version thereof. What is left unsaid in the report’s analysis and a telling lacuna in a document whose authors seem so sensitive to history is that Iraq itself, and indeed all the states of the Eastern Mediterranean—Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel—are the end products of a similar style of colonialism, the inter-war phenomenon of League of Nations’ Mandates. While from a comparative perspective the parallels are striking, what is a constant in the historical experience of the Mandate system in the Middle East and the planned American Mandate for Iraq is that both are predicated on Orientalist and essentialized conceptions of Arab and Muslim society and the unique identification of liberalism with Western hegemony. And just as the Mandate system contributed to the destabilization of colonial and post-colonial Middle Eastern society, the lack of democratic structures and the failure of the inter-war international system, the cost of the American Mandate for Iraq will be similar, especially in the weakening of the UN and the way it will make permanent the radicalization of the region.

Colonialism in Drag: Sykes-Picot in the Wilsonian Moment

During WWI, and long before its outcome was clear, representatives of France and Britain met to divide the Ottoman Empire (1916). The plan, remembered as the Sykes-Picot agreement for the two civil servants who drew it up, assigned to the two states areas of “direct control” and “indirect control.” France’s area of direct control was along the Eastern Mediterranean from southern Lebanon into Anatolia, with inland Syria under indirect influence. Britain was given exclusive control over southern Mesopotamia—primarily the oil producing regions adjacent to Kuwait and Iranian oilfields, and indirect control over inland Iraq. Palestine was to be placed under international control.

Growing American influence and pressure at home forced a shift in the way the British and French portrayed themselves in the region. Less as conquerors, they began to situate themselves as the humanitarian liberators of the Arabs from the authoritarian oppression of the Ottoman Empire. The British instigation of the Arab revolt, which has become a permanent feature of Western popular culture in the form of David Lean's film "Lawrence of Arabia," was, in part, a consequence of this shift.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire colonial and military officials sought to persuade the local inhabitants that the European liberation/conquest of the region had been done on their behalf. Sykes and Picot themselves toured Syria in late 1918 and early 1919 delivering speeches calculated to lower local expectations of complete independence, no doubt in anticipation of the implementation of the territorial arrangements outlined in the once secret treaty which the pair had engineered. All of their presentations insisted on the existence of a separate Arab nation that, Picot maintained, had been oppressed "for four centuries by the government of Istanbul." Both claimed that the liberation of the Arabs and other peoples from this oppression had motivated them to make war on the Turks and that the Arabs were a nation among nations; nations that had joined together to "end Turkish despotism and return freedom to the people."

Stanley Maude, the British General who conquered Mesopotamia expressed similar sentiments before the incredulous inhabitants of Baghdad:

O people of Baghdad, remember that for 26 generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have endeavored to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realising the aspirations of your race...

By the time of the Paris Peace Conference, and fearing that Wilsonian notions of national self-determination would scuttle their colonial interests, the British and French seized upon a system of temporary “Mandates” as a compromise solution that would appear less “colonial.” Article 22 of the League’s *Covenant* explained the need for Mandates:

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

In order to bring these peoples into that “strenuous modern world,” “advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility,” would take on the burden of “tutelage.” And while the League recognized the “existence [of the Arab states of the Eastern Mediterranean] as independent nations” they would be “subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone.” Even though the League’s guidelines included a clause that the people of the soon-to-be-mandated territories should have some say in their Mandatory, Britain and France were given those areas first coveted in Sykes-Picot. Ultimately, the Mandate system envisioned the tutelage/ superintending role as temporary. At the time of their establishment, however, the voluntary exit of a colonial power was unprecedented and most considered the French and British presence permanent.

The most immediate consequence of the imposition of the Mandates was the drawing of new boundaries and the creation of unprecedented geographical constructs like Syria and Iraq. The new borders often had disastrous economic impacts and disrupted trade and migration patterns for thousands throughout the region. The territorial divisions cloaked a more concerted effort to create nonviable states (Trans-Jordan) or states in which potentially loyal religious minorities would amount to a plurality (Lebanon). Iraq was the most curious of these creations, binding together three Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul into a new state.

In the fiction of the Mandate system, these new states would run themselves with advice and guidance from the Mandatory power. Consequently, parliaments were convened, constitutions written, elections held. In the case of Iraq, a new king was imposed. Faysal ibn Hussein (no relation to Saddam), who had briefly ruled in Syria, was elevated to the new throne of Iraq by the British following a questionable plebiscite. The states were systematically prevented from developing independent militaries, and instead, colonial troops from other imperial holdings were often employed to establish control. In the case of Syria and Iraq, men from non-Sunni Muslim minority groups like Alawites, Ismailis, Armenians and Assyrians were often used to bolster military units commanded by European officers. Foreign policy, security apparatuses, antiquities and tariff and trade policies were the domain of the Mandatory power. Education, court systems, and most middle management positions were left to the locals. In what must have been seen as one of the more humiliating dimensions of the Mandate system, Mandated states were responsible for paying the salaries of those officials “advising” them. The *Guiding Principles* outlines a similar plan to reimburse nation building costs with the Iraqi oil revenue (11-12).

Nevertheless, in a departure from their previous colonial enterprises, the French and the British sought for the most part to remain “behind the scenes.” Not only was this done to fulfill the letter of the Mandate, but it made sense from an administrative perspective. Still, the ultimate power in each of the Mandate states was the resident “High Commissioner” who could and would employ the military to enforce colonial will. Among the many responsibilities of the High Commissioner was periodic reporting of the improvement of conditions in the areas under his tutelage to the League. Rarely did the League challenge the veracity of these reports or criticize the practices of Mandatories; consequently the organization’s credibility as an anti-imperialist, liberal entity diminished through the course of the inter-war period. A caricature of its former self, and thus weakened, the League failed to prevent the brutal Italian colonization of Ethiopia or stand against Japanese militarism in China.

Resistance to the Mandates and Inter-War Politics

Before the ink was dry on the documents establishing the various Mandates on the new states of the Middle East, resistance to French and British neo-

colonialism had begun throughout the region. While many of these movements resembled proto-typical national resistance movements, and would become more formalized in the course of the inter-war period, opposition also arose in ways that were less easily understandable in the idiom of nationalism and made more sense when seen through the lens of late-Ottoman forms of religious authority and patterns of legitimacy. Regardless of form, the movements against European colonialism pivoted on two major themes: first, the whole notion who liberated whom; and second, whether those societies now liberated by the West were in need of “tutelage.”

With the exception of a very tiny group of Arab nationalists, British and French efforts to liberate the Arabs from Ottoman suzerainty rang hollow. The Arab identity was itself of little relevance to most, and until very recently the term Arab would be more commonly associated with desert-dwelling Bedouin. The urban, urbane, cosmopolitan inhabitants of cities like Damascus or Beirut would have bristled at the notion of being called Arab. More substantively, notions of identity followed lines of religious affiliation. Indeed the post-war efforts to enforce an Arab identity stemmed from the need to create Arabs, and Turks for that matter, in order to obscure the religious bond between the two groups and to disengage the newly imagined ethnicities from an historical dependence on Islam and the very real possibility of an ongoing anti-imperialist solidarity within its structure.

When seen from another direction the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, despite the authoritarian dimensions of its rule, were loyal to the state inasmuch as the state defended and protected Islam. The British and French—as Christians and Westerners—by definition could not accomplish this. Thus, as resistance took shape in the former empire, it acquired an explicitly Islamist character. Exemplary of this moment was a declaration made by one of the various groups fighting the French in Northern Syria in the early 1920s. The French should leave,

because of the existence of the government of the
paramount Islamic Caliphate which is giving aid to it
[the people], [this people] who consider themselves
one part of the several parts of the general Islamic
community and fight under its flag

Clearly sectarian in tone, the document makes mention neither of Arabs nor Turks and but instead embraced a vital Islamic community. As the French

abandoned parts of Anatolia to this resistance, campaigns of ethnic cleansing followed in which the residual Armenian population—which had survived the Genocide of 1915—was forced to flee again.

The British liberators of Mesopotamia were also greeted by a revolt. Equally expressing itself in terms of local autonomy and Islamic legitimacy, this revolt would bind together urban Muslims with Arab tribal confederations along the Euphrates and last several months. Following a brutal campaign of suppression which left over 10,000 Iraqis (and 450 British soldiers) dead, the resistance was broken. Other comparably bloody moments of resistance would occur later, most notably the Great Revolt in Palestine in the 1930s. It is not unreasonable to suspect that American efforts at liberation will be met by similar sentiments—not just in Iraq, but in other predominately Muslim countries.

The assertion that the societies of the Eastern Mediterranean were in need of tutelage was likewise met with derision. The territory conquered by the British and the French had been the stage for nearly a 100-year process of modernization and state centralization. Certainly the level of development of the region compared favorably with those European states once part of the Empire of Austria-Hungary—Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia—slated for complete independence in the post-war settlements. The entire region had been fully integrated—though in a subordinate position—into international patterns of trade. Schools and universities were established, and chambers of commerce and industry had been formed. With the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the Ottoman Empire had even begun to embrace liberal notions of political and intellectual freedom and the creation of a national economy which rejected the debilitating economic concessions imposed on the state by the Europeans during the course of the 19th century. The various social and economic reforms left the Ottoman Empire as one of the strongest non-Western states on the globe and the Ottoman military, far from collapsing in the face of the Allied assault, withstood successfully the two major expeditionary forces sent against it in the initial years of the war—Gallipoli—and the first invasion of Iraq, both of which left thousands of British, Australian and Anglo-Indian soldiers dead or captured. The inherent strength of late-Ottoman society—and the fact that the Ottoman Empire, were it to be left intact, would have controlled vast amounts of oil—no doubt contributed to the Western efforts to force its division. Thus divided, the residual states still possessed layers of bureaucrats, local notables and an emerging middle class of liberal professionals and businessmen who formed

the backbone of resistance to European colonialism. As the Mandates evolved, the British and French turned to older strategies of divide and conquer to moderate the position of those antagonistic to their rule. Such techniques included the encouragement of compradorial cadres within minority groups and the use of bureaucratic strategies to make more acute sectarian and ethnic divisions within the areas under their control. The formation of Lebanon by the French and early British cooperation with Zionists are the most pertinent examples of this phenomenon. This form of rule was later adopted by most of the post-colonial governments of the region and fully integrated into styles of authoritarian rule.

As both the French and British grew exhausted by their colonial endeavor, they moved to more open cooperation with the least liberal parts of Middle Eastern society, primarily the semi-feudal notability of the Ottoman period who still dominated much of urban life. Ironically, this elite was itself under tremendous threat from an emergent urban middle class that peopled civil society and ideologically and culturally resembled more the Europeans themselves. Thus colonialism contributed the persistence of the Middle East's *ancien régime* and the political marginalization of a liberal-minded middle class. Planks in the *Guiding Principles* have the potential to do the same. While the authors of the report seem less committed to the idea of an ethnic division of Iraq, their continued advocacy of a separate de facto Kurdish "enclave" in a federal system is equally support for the Kurdish notability who, despite taking on the mantle of political leaders, have divided Iraqi Kurdistan into fiefs. The report's intention to employ "consultative councils" made up of "leaders at the national and local level" and "representatives of external opposition" (7) upon the occupation of the country strikes me again as an attempt to use a newer version of Mandate-era illiberal notable politics to identify a pliant clientele and suppress dissent. This strategy when deployed in Afghanistan—i.e., the Loya Jirga—did nothing to instill democracy, but rather ensured continued warlord hegemony.

Exit Strategies

The gradual turning over of authority in British and French controlled Mandated areas to the semi-feudal elite anticipated their final "exit strategies." In the case of the French, the election of a socialist premier in 1936 led to a period of direct negotiations between the notable elite of both

Syria and Lebanon but not a complete withdrawal. The Second World War and post-war French efforts to reclaim parts of their empire made their final departure a clumsy affair. The basic colonial ethos of the permanence of sectarianism was left behind in the organic document establishing the Lebanese Republic—taking sectarianism a fact of Lebanese political culture and a contributing factor of the 1975 civil war. In Syria, the urban notables who ruled briefly were replaced almost immediately by military strong men drawn from the minority groups from which the French built the armed forces. The ascendancy of the Alawites in the person of the recently deceased Baathist dictator of Syria, Hafez al-Assad is a residue of this aspect of French colonial policy.

Great Britain's failures in Palestine are legendary and in 1948 they merely abandoned it to the United Nations. However, the British exit strategy for Iraq most closely resembles that implicit in the *Guiding Principles*. By the early 1930s, the British had grown confident that their imposed king, Faysal, would be able to rule by employing a mix of divide and conquer and the British Royal Air Force. The treaty negotiated between Baghdad and London that followed is itself a blueprint for neocolonialism and anticipates the way various European states and the U.S. would deal with former colonies or conquered states in the post-WWII era. By the terms of the 1930 Treaty, the British retained two air bases in the country and reserved the right to unilateral intervention in Iraq. The Iraqi military would be developed under close British supervision: all military hardware was to be purchased from British companies, foreign trainers were to be British and if Iraqi military personnel traveled abroad for training, they were required to go to the United Kingdom. The question of oil had been handled previously in a 1925 agreement by which the Iraqi Petroleum Company—a British firm—had exclusive rights to the development of Iraqi oil reserves in return for the payment of modest royalties. Far from completing the developmental and liberal process envisioned at the award of the Mandate, the British had merely identified a limited number of strategic interests in Iraq—access to oil and military assets—and abandoned Iraqi society to those who could best dominate it. Exemplary of this British abandonment was their failure to stop the immediate post-independence genocidal massacres of the Assyrian Christian community of Iraq. The Assyrians, most of whom were refugees from Anatolia had made up a significant portion of the colonial military and served as a convenient stand-in for anti-British anger. Bakr Sidqi, the officer most responsible for the massacres, used his newly acquired prestige to mount a military coup in 1936, thus setting the stage for Iraqi political instability for

the next 45 years. And while the British did intervene in Iraqi affairs in 1941, it was not to reassert civilian constitutional rule but rather to suppress the government of Rashid Ail al-Gaylani, an Iraqi nationalist who expressed pro-German sympathies, and moreover sought to abrogate the terms of the 1930 Treaty.

The *Guiding Principles* report includes a similar strategy to disengage access to oil from the process of democratization. In the short-term, the report advocates “Isolating the [oil] industry from domestic turmoil.” (16) While the report envisions this isolation as only temporary, American withdrawal from the oil fields would be contingent on the stability of Iraq, defined here as an Iraqi commitment to the “depoliticization” of the oil industry and again, the “leveling of the playing field.” In this sense, the American plan copies the underlying sense of the 1930 Treaty: the Iraqis will have sovereignty over their oil resources, as long as sovereignty does not interfere in the American strategic access to those resources. The physical format of the report itself seems to mimic this stance. The working group’s report fills pages 1-14. The sole addendum, “Oil and Iraq: Opportunities and Challenges” take up the next 13.

Conclusion

Perhaps hoping to make the best of a terrible situation, the authors of the *Guiding Principles* have failed to imagine a solution for Iraq that transcends the basic formulas of 20th century colonialism. The inherent illegitimacy which will adhere to any U.S. occupation of Iraq—no matter how sheltered by “public diplomacy”—will tar any who seek to cooperate in democratization as collaborators. That the plan includes the obvious limitation of Iraqi sovereignty means any Iraqi leader who cooperates will again be viewed as a servant of American interests, no matter how enlightened. Other questions remain: would the U.S. allow an Iraqi government to continue to oppose Israeli policies, perhaps even force it to recognize Israel? To facilitate security, would it place permanent bases on Iraqi soil like those in Turkey, Qatar or Afghanistan? More to the point, any ruler who rules only with the aid of American—Christian—occupation forces would lack, in a prima facie sense, any effective legitimacy. Consider for a moment Osama bin Laden’s criticism of the Saudi royal family’s support of American troops in Arabia.

Certainly the use of the UN to “supervise” an American Mandate on Iraq will add credibility to those who denounce that body as a tool of Western imperialism. Likewise, the use of “crimes against humanity” trials to purge the upper echelon of Iraq’s domestic oil industry as the *Guiding Principles* advocates (17) is a conscious perversion of international norms of justice for purely corporate ends. Any such efforts would turn farcical the whole system of human rights jurisprudence.

Ultimately the plan points to some of the reasons why colonialism in any form must be opposed. By the late-1930s the peoples of the Middle East had only experienced the liberal age promised to them by the League of Nations as an oppressive mixture of brutish colonialism, political instability, social and cultural dislocations and Great-depression era economic hardship: liberalism had lost credibility and grown hollow. It was in that context that young educated Arab men began to turn to more radical and racist Pan-Arab ideologies like Baathism. Simultaneously, it was the era in which more conservative Islamic movements emerged that were opposed to both the secularizing dimensions of nationalism and Western Imperialism. Present day radical Islamists like al-Qaeda and Islamic Jihad trace their lineage to groups like the Muslim Brotherhood of the inter-war period of European colonialism. The people of Iraq, and by extension, those in the remainder of the Arab world stand to suffer promised American liberation in the same way.

A full text version of the *Guiding Principles for U.S. Post-Conflict Policy in Iraq* is available at
http://www.cfr.org/pdf/Iraq_TF.pdf.

Suggested Reading:

Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920-1945* (Princeton, 1987)

Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq, 1914-1932* (London, 1976)

Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, -1978)

Who Speaks for the Iraqi People?

by
Wadood Hamad

I

Nearly nine decades after Britain recast the map of Iraq, installed a group of ex-Ottoman officers and Arab-Sunni landowners with a Hijazi emir at the helm to rule over Iraq's people, the U.S., with Britain playing a supporting role, has choreographed a meeting, in wintry London in mid-December 2002, of a hodge-podge group of Iraqi self-proclaimed liberals, politico-religious figures, ex-Ba'athists, and ex-high ranking security and military personnel to serve as the new epiphany to perpetuate a century-old script, once U.S.-U.K. jetfighters and bombers rain hell over the hapless inhabitants of Iraq: exogenous, hierarchical reign grounded in ethno-sectarian chauvinism and wedded to varying forms and intensities of repression.

Now as then, the enlisted group cries for an Iraq different from the prevalent downtrodden one and claims that invading armies are coming to the aid of the helpless populace. It is almost an identical reproduction of various episodes in history: a (necessarily) new cast and minor change to the montage, but with novel methods for executing the plot—after all it is the 21st century. One further significant difference, though. The Shiite religious establishment at the turn of the twentieth century had the foresight and resolve to recognize the true motives of the British occupiers, and had thus raised encompassing and inclusive slogans for the liberation of Iraq from foreign control/influence, and called for independence and indigenous self-rule. Their 21st century imposters (al-Hakeem *et al.*, see below) pledge unmitigated subservience to power—in all its manifestations. The people, no doubt, will rebound and revolt, alas later rather than sooner: years of ruthless Ba'athist repression, devastating wars and genocidal economic sanctions would incapacitate and demoralize any people, anywhere. However, their historical memory is still vivid and strong; they do need time to collect the shattered pieces and they will pull up their socks, as the British learned all too well in 1918 and 1920. The sequel to the meeting of the “blessed group” was to take place in Iraqi Kurdistan in January of this year, but this has been

delayed time and again since the U.S. now regards it as unnecessary to its preparatory plans for war against Iraq. Using segments of the Iraqi opposition as their fig-leaf for claiming liberation had served its purpose to befuddle western populations and provide false hope to the weary, nostalgic and confused Iraqi exile/émigré community; the preparation and build-up for war are at a far too advanced stage to merit a secondary distraction.¹

The honeymoon has been disrupted then, and cracks (of relational intimacy?) have begun to surface among the members making up the “blessed group,” on the one hand, and between them and their principal financier-cum-guarantor, on the other. But is there any substance to suggest that these inchoate cracks may develop into catastrophic fractures between the Anglo-American sponsored Iraqi opposition and its protector? The relationship has, from the beginning, been one of complete submission on the part of this select Iraqi group, who has been unquestioningly accepting of explicit agenda-setting, control and domination by the U.S. patron.² There exists no evidence to suggest independent decision-making on the part of these Iraqi oppositionists, or the 65-member follow-up committee appointed at the end of the London meeting. Several independents had participated in the London meeting and have since withdrawn claiming as reason the undemocratic conduct in which the follow-up committee was instituted, as well as concern about its membership. Two prominent members are Wafeeq al-Samarra’i, head of military intelligence until 1996, and Misha’an al-Jubouri, high-ranking Ba’athist functionary responsible for many of the crimes committed against the participants of the ill-fated 1991 uprising—that claimed no less than 200,000 civilian lives (excluding those perished as a result of the U.S.-led onslaught).³

Kanan Makiya, the self-appointed spokesperson for the Iraqi people, and favorite of many media outlets in Britain and the U.S., was a key member of the London conveners and the follow-up committee; he is a close associate of Ahmed Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress. In preparation for the London meeting, Makiya presented a list of 50 academics and professionals for vetting by the U.S. administration prior to dispatching invitations for attendance. He was also instrumental in tabling a paper, prepared in conjunction with State Department officials and right-wing think-tanks, which defined the means and scope of change in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. Makiya had clearly expressed this vision in an article published in the November issue of the British magazine *Prospect*. He demanded in that piece, and elsewhere since the Gulf war of 1991, that U.S. troops invade Iraq in

order to secure régime change, and could see no other way for deposing Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist régime. He has thus been extremely supportive of war and welcoming of U.S. adoption of military action towards Iraq, which, he approvingly acknowledges "is driven, of course, by strategic American considerations post-11th September."⁴ Makiya calls for a territoriality-based federated Iraq where decision-making is devolved to regions "in which each ... receives its share of national resources (including oil money) according to the relative size of its population." This, he informs us, is "what is in effect happening in northern Iraq now, through the UN's oil-for-food programme."⁵ The two principal pillars of Makiya's, and indeed the U.S., vision for Iraq is that it be non-Arab and demilitarized.

Iraqi Kurdistan has actually been a failed experiment. Many of us, in the aftermath of the Gulf war, had eagerly looked to a burgeoning form of democratic organization and self-rule. What resulted instead were two regions, eastern and western, controlled by the PUK and KDP respectively. The parliament has been ineffectual since neither leader of the two main Kurdish parties would accept the result of a democratic election. There have therefore existed two parliaments with two prime ministers, one from the PUK and another from the KDP. Customs from legal and illegal goods transported through Kurdistan to and from the rest of Iraq have been the driving motive for this territorial split. The *modus operandi* for the Kurdish political parties remains one of tribal allegiance, and tribes control regions, thus the split. In spite of Makiya's ostentatious claims to the contrary, his vision of territorial devolution is steeped in ethno-religious divides and is a recipe for further fragmentation—into three explicit regions: a northern region for the Kurds, a southern one for the (mostly) Shi'a Arabs and a central one for (mostly) the Sunnis. His plans for the country become clear when he avers that "the government of the U.S., further to a treaty with a new duly instituted Iraqi government, agrees to keep military presence inside Iraq, whose purpose is to guarantee the territorial integrity of Iraq for a period measured in years, not months."⁶ This is a euphemism for mandated control, and it is akin to what Britain had envisaged for Iraq in the first half of the twentieth century.

Moreover, finding a common language with U.S. policy makers, especially the current hawks in Washington, Makiya calls for a fragmentation of Iraqi territory according to the concentration of oil resources: Iraq is known to have the second largest proven reserves (112 billion barrels), but there are many more untapped; the U.S. government puts the estimate at 432 billion

barrels—cf. Saudi Arabia, whose 259 billion barrels is currently regarded as the largest reserve.⁷ It should now be crystal clear what a demilitarized, territorialitized and federated Iraq, whose geopolitical entity is guaranteed by the U.S. through treaties, signifies: Control over the richest oil resources—Iraq and the region's bloody curse—by the planet's sole imperial military and economic power.

The fact that Iraq becomes non-Arab is to assuage the Israelis and initiate a new phase of regional re-mapping of influence. The Baghdad Pact of the first half of the twentieth century was intended to bring together Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Turkey and the nascent Israel into a new power center that Britain could manipulate and control. The Pact was also to serve as a geopolitical conduit to Asia and Africa, especially that British control over India was waning. The plan failed, as did its precursor, the Portsmouth Treaty of 1948—designed to link Iraq politically, economically and militarily to Britain along similar lines to U.S. and Makiya's desires: thanks to enormous popular discontent within Iraq, which pressured the government through sustained and magnificent demonstrations. Opposition to the underlying principles of the Portsmouth Treaty and the Baghdad Pact grew in intensity, organization and resolve over the next decade, and ultimately culminated in toppling the monarchy and establishing Iraq's first republic. As I argued in the Fall 2002 issue of *Logos*, Iraq's plans to nationalize its oil fields in 1960 prompted the U.S., the burgeoning political and military power after WWII, to devise plans for "régime change." The Ba'athists came to power in a bloody coup on February 8, 1963, removed progressives from the political scene and plunged the country into a spiral of political instability and years of repression, and, in the final analysis, indeed paved the road, if not colluded, to firmly placing Iraq under the U.S. sphere of influence. Iraq's tragedy is this nexus of imperial designs and brutal dictators—whose existence is dependent on subservience to and protection by the imperial power—that will continue to impoverish its people, unless and until progressives—Iraqi, Arab, American and others—clearly recognize, understand and work realistically to end it. In the meantime, the charade continues, and today oppositionists will become tomorrow's brutal oppressors in order to maintain privilege and office (real power is, lest we forget, lies elsewhere), since they are essentially devoid of a popular mandate.

II

So Makiya, the INC, *et al.* hope for a U.S.-led war, encourage an invasion and occupation of Iraq, request that the U.S. be Iraq's long-term guarantor and protector, and *yet* were surprised when the Bush Administration officially announced over recent weeks that it plans to install a U.S. general to rule Iraq, have senior U.S. military personnel occupy all senior government positions while retaining current Ba'athist cadre for running the country, then gradually move to a U.S.-sponsored civilian administration, and ultimately (perhaps) permit Iraqis rule themselves!⁸ Makiya, Chalabi *et al.* are either first-class hypocrites, or, if one is kind, dupes. Alas, I do not believe them to be dupes; they marvelously represent the decrepit state of political discourse prevalent in the Arab world. Again, the progeny of how (any local) dictatorial rule is inherently intertwined with imperial hegemonic plans, which, as a combination, seriously attempt to eliminate any legitimate opposition to either. The U.S. has superbly succeeded in having both Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist régime and a significant portion of the opposition to it subsumed under its wing.

Local, brutal dictators do not grow on trees, and they are not exclusive Iraqi, Arab, Muslim or third-world phenomena. Material conditions contribute to their evolution. The U.S., since the early seventies and sealed during the Carter Administration, have regarded the whole Middle East region as its sphere of influence. The demise of the Soviet Union vacated the ground for a steady and resolute determination of these plans, the first being the Gulf war, which securely established U.S. presence in the Arabian/Persian Gulf region. The débâcle in ex-Yugoslavia, and what ensued, gave the U.S. a firm foothold in eastern and central Europe. Osama bin Laden, America's creation and scion of terror and regress, gave it the *carte blanche* it needed to enter the oil-rich central republics of the former Soviet Union. The first unchallenged empire in human history now seems arrogantly confident that it can spread its hegemony the world over, unhindered. With securing Iraq, as a logical next step in this plan, the U.S. will, for the foreseeable future, hold the reigns over Europe, Japan, China and evolving economies of Asia, since it will now *directly* control the major oil resources of the world. And one is only (rationally) to expect that democracy will not be on their agenda for Iraq, Saudi Arabia or elsewhere in the region. The argument that oil-producing countries—whoever rules them—would still need outside markets to sell their oil, and hence the U.S. may well become their genuine partner and thus help promote liberal and democratic changes in those countries, is myopic and incomplete. The U.S., as the sole superpower, intends to consolidate its power and control, not dilute them. If democratic rule is truly permitted in

the Arab world, then the latter would be free to hold dealings as best befits its inhabitants. There may result a serious dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians towards a just resolution to the 50-year old conflict; and the latter could not then be used as the fig leaf for denying democracy for the Arabs, on the one hand, or cornering the Israeli people into an interminable cycle of fear, security-measures and repression of the Palestinians, on the other. There is thus a palpable link between the tragedies of Iraq and Palestine, and it must be understood within the political and economic contexts of global and regional hegemony.

Capitalist economies are essentially manufacturing-based and necessarily require a stable supply of affordable energy for their sustenance. The 20th-century revolution in information technology was not intended to supplant the basic mechanism through which the capitalist industrial economy churns away; thus, there is no credible argument to suggest a decline in reliance on Middle Eastern oil.⁹ To the contrary, as the Asian economies fully integrate into the world capitalist economy, demand for oil will increase and, so will the necessity for untrammled control over its resources.¹⁰

While maintaining similar overall objectives, the means of arriving at them began to vary—insofar as the Iraq questions was concerned—under the George W. Bush administration from that of Clinton. The Clinton administration saw containment as an effective policy of control, hence, the institutionalization/perpetuation of the genocidal economic sanctions against Iraq's people. It knew that, sooner rather than later, it would secure control over Iraq's oil fields once the country and its rulers are reduced to complete subjugation and the people to utter misery. No one can seriously speak of a sovereign Iraq since 1991: Anglo-American war planes control the airspace north of the 36° and south of the 33° parallels, and Turkey has made several deep incursions inside north of Iraq claiming to hunt PKK fighters hiding in the mountains. Saddam Hussein's government continued, rhetoric notwithstanding, to offer more and more concessions to U.S. demands, while tremendously benefiting from the genocidal economic sanctions to strengthen its inner core and further contribute to impoverishing and reining in the populace. Between one and two million Iraqi professionals have sought refuge, since 1991, in Jordan, Yemen, Libya, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, the West and elsewhere in pursuit of securing some decent living for themselves and their families. If they are not crippled by depleted uranium-caused terminal diseases or old age, they flee the country. That is

the outcome of years of Ba'athist repression, western collusion and, more recently, genocidal economic sanctions.

The Bush entourage differs ideologically in terms of how to realize these common objectives; besides, the terror attacks of 9/11 gave the administration the excuse it needed not to hold off. It is well known that Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, pushed for attacking Iraq mere days after the terror attacks. Henry Kissinger's dictum of some 30 years ago was now to be fully attained: Oil is too important to be kept in Arab hands.

Every step taken by the current U.S. administration supports the above analysis. The war against Iraq will be launched, in spite of opposing world public opinion and regardless of whether a second UN resolution is passed or not and immaterial of its contents. At the time of writing, U.S. and British troops are in place in Kuwait (and elsewhere in the Gulf region), and more U.S. troops will soon be positioned in Turkey. Last minute shuttling between capitals and endeavors to table and pass resolutions is all too reminiscent of shuttle diplomacy on the part of the erstwhile Soviet Union, France and others to avert the 1991 Gulf war. The 200,000-plus U.S.-British troops are not vacationing in the Gulf region; they are there to secure U.S. global hegemony: the empire shall be unchallenged. We will no doubt also learn of war crimes akin to the 1991 incineration of 400-plus civilians at al-Amerriya bomb shelter, destruction of bridges, water treatment and electrical facilities, etc. In exemplary, pre-emptive apologetics, James Dao of *The New York Times* has already given us a glimpse of what to expect: "Could too much regard for Iraqi lives imperil U.S. troops?"¹¹ And there will be a flock of intellectuals and experts extolling the killings as victory for democracy and the free world. And, the sad fact, there will be some—perhaps many?—who will sheepishly believe their rancorous, racist ranting.

In the midst of war preparations, Iraqi children, women and men continue to die daily. Several hundred kilometers away, Ariel Sharon levels Palestinian villages and towns and kills its inhabitants with impunity: "Sharon is a man of peace," Bush famously exclaimed; and killing innocent civilians while allegedly pursuing terrorists and tyrants is allowed—and never mind the Geneva Convention, because it will soon be shunned by the world's sole imperial power, much like Kyoto, the ICC and a host of other treaties and bodies.

Cruelty begets cruelty, as violence breeds violence; and ignorance further nurtures an already aggravated situation. The (animal) instinct of survival is bound to spring viciousness when marrying oppression and destitution of the one vis-à-vis the arrogance of power by the other. It would then be illogical, even criminal, to blame the victims for actions that are only reflections of their immediate surroundings. *No one* is to condone them; however, one must understand the whys and wherefores of their emergence. War is hell, and occupation is demeaning and dehumanizing. Helpless, besieged victims will resort to debased tactics, and we must not forget why and how it started.

III

“When we consider the role of intellectuals,” Noam Chomsky elucidated some three decades ago, “our basic concern must be their role in the creation and analysis of ideology.”¹² Makiya, like Fuad Ajami, Fawaz Gerges and other apologists for the U.S. emporium, uses a one-dimensional approach steeped in pseudo-psychoanalytical examination of human history and imbued with glorified theories of cultural specificity. He, as they, misses the social dynamics of human history, and extols the virtues of exclusivity. Hence his call for a non-Arab Iraq, wishing to transplant in its place an exogenous anything—for the sheer reason that it is different, and must thus be superior. Paraded as “a leading Iraqi dissident intellectual,” “a democrat,” he has seemingly found no time, prior to the publication of *Republic of Fear* in 1989 using the alias Samir al-Khalil, to publicly speak or write on the cruelties committed in Iraq. Neither did he deem appropriate, nor essential, decrying the mass forced deportations of Iraqi Shi’ites that began in the seventies and continued ferociously throughout the early eighties. However, he narcissistically preaches idealism to the Arab youth: “A new self-critical discourse is needed, one that is rooted in a thoroughgoing insistence upon the inviolable sanctity of human life and subordination of everything else to this criterion.”¹³ Not a word has ever been uttered by Makiya criticizing the genocidal economic sanctions and the half million to one million dead children, women and men: not a hint of “the inviolable sanctity of human life.” Still, using the alias al-Khalil, he wrote shortly after the Gulf war, in a booklet entitled *The Unfinished War: Democracy in Iraq and the Requirement for Alliance*¹⁴: “Was it necessary to kill so many Iraqis, knowing fully well they were not interested in fighting? And was it necessary to paralyze the entire country?” (p. 36) However, he hastened to add, six pages later, that “the only way for the Americans to heal the wounds of the [Gulf] war, and to ensure

that it not be talked of in negative connotations, is by extending their helping hand to those Iraqis hoping for a different government in Iraq.”

Makiya never tires of looking for solutions externally, and internally for the roots of all of Arab problems. America, the more superior civilization, will salve and save Iraq; the Arabs betrayed Iraq because they were silent during Saddam Hussein's years of repression; Arab society is backward because of deep, inherent, unresolvable contradictions. Having sheltered himself from public commentary on Iraqi politics while safely and comfortably living in the West, he pours his scorn on leftist Arab intellectuals for not doing more. He attacks the very ones who, using their real names, did not waver from speaking or writing uncompromisingly: Abdel Rehman Munif, stripped of his Saudi nationality for writing the courageous quintet, *Cities of Salt*, has been a penetrating critic of Iraq and other Arab states; Fawaz Trabulsi, who had spent many years fighting during the Lebanese civil war, has tirelessly written on social and undemocratic ills in the Arab world; Edward Said, who has hardly spared a moment without critiquing Palestinian or Arab leaders for the morass the Arab world is in, continually reflected on the past. He scoffs at those, and ignores unrelenting leftist Iraqi writers and intellectuals who—unlike him—did not spare an opportunity to publicly critique the Ba'athist régime, Arab-Islamic heritage or social ills: the likes of the late Hadi al-Alawi, Muthafar al-Nawwab and Saadi Youssef. However, he says nothing of Iraqi liberal writers living in the West who, like him, have been silent about Saddam Hussein's long history of crimes—but have only recently found ample opportunity to do so.

In summary, Makiya prostitutes the plight of the Iraqis; he summersaults the moral argument by obfuscating the devastating effects of sanctions, yet calls for more death and destruction to purportedly save Iraqis; he weighs heavily on the interventionist factor versus belief in the people's ability to make history; he absolves the U.S. from the role it has played in impoverishing and demoralizing the populace; and he shamelessly views Iraq's, and the Arab world's, entire complex of social problems through a reductionist, culturalist prism.¹⁵

IV

There are no shortcuts to establishing democracy in any country, and Iraq is no exception. If it is to be genuine and long lasting, democracy must grow

organically and its roots must emerge from a fearless critique of the status quo: Saddam Hussein's chauvinist régime must be gotten rid of before any prospect for genuine democratic change can ensue, but this cannot be effected through military intervention, whose objectives serve U.S. imperial interests, and not those of the people of Iraq. To miss either point would prove catastrophic for the inhabitants of that country. Iraq, having suffered decades of ruthless despotism and strangulation, can emerge from this morass if we are to understand that it possesses the human, intellectual, historical, and, above all, the will for effecting this change. In spite of decades of political repression, the populace, at large, endeavored to be educated, cultured and worldly, have a sense of humor, and build their country. They have had an astounding will for progress. However, we must not eschew that hope has slowly become absent from Iraqi lexicon as the Anglo-American alliance, under UN guise, besieged the country with economic sanctions that effectively strengthened Saddam Hussein's régime even further and made the populace more dependent on it than ever. *Thus*, the confused and misguided expectations from an invasion that a large portion of exiles and émigrés seems to pin their hopes on, and the almost nonchalant atmosphere among Iraqis inside Iraq. They are dying daily, being politically repressed daily, being bombarded by British and U.S. warplanes almost daily, and being shunned from securing a decent existence for their offspring. People of the world, especially the American people, must fathom this morbid reality. I cannot emphasize enough the fact that Saddam Hussein and his entire régime are as dangerous to Iraqis as the Bush war and U.S. hegemonic plans: Imperialism has found—and still does—faithful allies in local third-world dictators: Saddam Hussein is the brutal example *par excellence*.

The impressive demonstrations and marches that swept more than 600 cities the world over on February 15 is a damning testimony of opposition to looming war plans. However, the peace movement needs to be sophisticated enough to provide a cogent critique of the Iraq questions by truly incorporating the aspirations of Iraqis for a free and democratic Iraq—a critique grounded in a universal conception of humanity, social justice and self-determination free of corporate greed and ethno-religious chauvinisms; a critique necessarily opposed to such condescending, if not racist, utterances as Colin Powell's that "Iraq is not ready for Jeffersonian democracy."

If the world is to show its solidarity with the people of Iraq, it must continue its push to avert war and, in the likely event that war begins, to stop it. An

alternative scenario to military action is possible, but it requires focus and it need be based on a framework wedded to:

1. the *unconditional and immediate* lifting of the genocidal economic sanctions;
2. supporting the struggle of Iraqis to establish a free, democratic and federal Iraq for all its inhabitants—free of political, religious, sectarian, ethnic or gender discrimination;
3. the convening of an international conference involving representatives of all of Iraq's opposition forces, under UN sponsorship, to facilitate the peaceful unseating of Saddam Hussein and his government and the establishment of democratic rule through free elections;
4. presenting to the International Criminal Court a list of Iraqi officials, inside and outside Iraq, responsible for committing crimes against humanity;
5. presenting to the ICC a list of UN officials, as well as U.S., British and other nationals, complicit in the genocide against Iraqis through the imposition and perpetuation of economic sanctions;
6. presenting for trial a list of U.S. officials and military personnel responsible for the premeditated mutilation and murder of Iraqi civilians—in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibiting the endangerment of civilian lives in times of war—resulting from the enduring effects of using depleted uranium against Iraqis during the 1991 Gulf war;
7. bringing to trial U.S. government and military officials responsible for the destruction of Iraq's civilian infrastructure (water treatment and electric facilities, bridges, etc.) during the Gulf war, and for causing immense harm to its civilian population as a result;
8. bringing to trial U.S. government and military functionaries responsible for the destruction of a civilian bomb shelter, al-Amerriya, and causing the death of over 400 civilians;
9. bringing to trial Kuwaiti and Saudi government officials responsible for providing financial backing to Saddam Hussein's régime, during the 1980s, to prolong the Iran-Iraq War and for being complicit in the premeditated murder of over 500,000 Iraqi and Iranian soldiers;
10. bringing to trial Kuwait and Saudi government officials responsible for aiding and abetting the torture and murder of Iraqi civilians through the explicit provision of monetary support to Saddam Hussein's ruthless nexus of security and intelligence apparatuses;

11. bringing to trial Iraqi business and professional persons who knowingly traded with/for front companies and provided logistical and financial support for Saddam Hussein's official outlets, inside and outside Iraq, responsible for incarceration, torture and murder of Iraqi political opponents, inside and outside Iraq;
12. bringing to trial Iraqi and Arab business persons who knowingly sold expired medication to Iraq since 1991, that resulted in untold deaths amongst Iraqi civilians.¹⁶

This is a serious, albeit a provisional, list that would require serious examination and study, as well as careful consideration as to how and where due process and procedure must be followed. Almost definitely, further additions would be necessary.

The Iraqi people deserve a serious and genuine chance to build democracy and put the shadow of wars, suffering and lost hopes behind them for good. The Palestinian people deserve the same, as do all Arabs and other peoples. The peace movement, if to gain credibility in the eyes of the Iraqi and other peoples, needs to educate the public in their respective countries with unadulterated facts, build links with emerging social groups in the developing world through a genuine dialogue free of lifelong Eurocentric, condescending attitudes, and, equally importantly, develop realistic, heterarchical, workable scenarios that would ensure long-lasting peace and progress for inhabitants of this planet. Let us learn from the proud lessons of ATTAC and the World Social Forum: How these were built, and how they grew in less than five years. An alternative world is possible, but I am not naïve to think it will materialize overnight. After all, "Men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."¹⁷

28 February, 2003

Notes

¹ The BBC World Service reported on February 26, 2003 the arrival of Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. administration's envoy to the Iraqi opposition, in Iraqi Kurdistan and—finally—the convening of the meeting in a subdued atmosphere. Khalilzad was reported to have informed those convened of plans to install a US military commander, Tommy Franks, as ruler of Iraq after invasion. He expressed the Administration's disapproval of announcing any Iraqi government-in-exile on the part of those oppositionists. Camera snapshots showed Jalal Talabani, head of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, warmly embrace Khalilzad and an accompanying official wearing U.S. military fatigues. With Turkey being promised a handsome largesse by the U.S. administration that secured the use of Turkish airbases and land by invading U.S. troops, and a green-light to enter its own troops into northern Iraq, and perhaps capture oil-rich Kirkuk, the Kurds of Iraq, blighted by a myopic and opportunistic leadership, will most likely be betrayed yet again by the Americans. One awaits nervously the advance of the Turkish army, notorious for its decades-long repression of the Kurds of Turkey.

² These groups are more accurately referred to as “political kiosks.” They came to being after 1991 and have been fully co-opted by one foreign intelligence service or another, but predominantly by those of the U.S. Their emergence stems from two principal historical reasons: First, years of Ba'athist repression leading to the fragmentation of genuine political opposition, and second, U.S. desire to find various avenues to control political discourse over Iraq. For more on this, see my “Iraq's Tragedy: Waiting for Godot!” in *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society & Culture*, Fall, 2002.

³ The majority of membership—more than three-quarters—comes from:

1. The Iraqi National Congress, INC, principally comprising professionals, businessmen and a sprinkling of liberal émigrés, led by Ahmed Chalabi, scion of one of Baghdad's oldest wealthy business and landowning families, who has historically been close to British officials since the period of the Iraq mandate; Chalabi, himself, is close to the Pentagon and the White House; the INC has attempted, with limited success, to project itself as an umbrella organization that includes the groups listed below; Ahmed Chalabi was indicted in Jordan, in absentia, for fraud and theft in the Petra Bank fiasco;
2. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, led by Jalal Talabani, who had, over the years, vacillated in aligning himself with the Americans, Iranians, and even Saddam Hussein's government;
3. The Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, led by Mas'oud Barazani, a feudal landowner, who, too, had recycled allegiance between the Americans, Iranians and Saddam Hussein's government;
4. The Iraqi National Accord, INA, a small group of mainly ex-military officers and disaffected Ba'athists, led by Ayad Alawi, a former Ba'athist and participant in the 1963 bloody coup that overthrew the first republic; Alawi has been suspected of personally supervising torture of Iraqi leftists and communists in the aftermath of the 1963 coup; he is said to be close to the British intelligence community;
5. The Constitutional Monarchist Movement, CMM, led by Ali ibin al-Hussein, distant relation to King Faisal II, who was deposed in 1958; he is said to have been favored by elements within the British Foreign Office, and has been gaining wider acceptance within circles of the U.S. administration; and

6. The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, SCIRI—a much older organization than any of the above—led by Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakeem, son of Ayatollah Muhsen al-Hakeem who, in the early sixties, colluded with right-wing Arab-nationalists and Ba'athists in Iraq by passing a fatwa barring the Shi'a from entering the Iraqi Communist Party, the largest mass movement in the country—and region—at the time; SCIRI had operated out of Iran during the Iran-Iraq war and since, and is close to the decision-making elements within the Iranian government: an apparent anomalous addition to the list, however, this group is the only one that commands some palpable support inside Iraq.
7. The remaining membership comprises independents (liberals, Arab-nationalists and Islamists, both Sunni and Shi'ite), and senior ex-government officials. It is worthy of note that representation was not proportional to the size of organization, rather to its closeness to U.S. decision-makers. Hence, the INC had the lion's share, followed by the Kurdish parties, the INA, former government officials and the monarchists.

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), small groupings of left-leaning Arab-nationalists, and al-Da'wa (Islamic Call) party—the largest Shi'ite politico-religious organization, which has also been at odds with SCIRI—boycotted the London meeting. While there still exists schisms within al-Da'wa party itself vis-à-vis participation in U.S.-sponsored meetings, a senior representative of the party was later sent to Washington and expressed lip service to the proclaimed aims of the meeting. The ICP, to its credit, is still very critical of the whole premise and had been working with European leftist parties for an alternative call to avert war and help the Iraqi people end Saddam Hussein's despotic rule. It is worthwhile noting, that the ICP is perhaps the sole exiled opposition group that has serious following inside Iraq, albeit underground and rather small in numbers. It is the oldest political party in Iraq—and at one time the largest in the Middle East—and has always had multifarious membership spanning religious and ethnic divides.

⁴ Kanan Makiya, "After Saddam 1," *Prospect*, November 2002. (Obtainable from www.prospect-magazine.co.uk.)

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Robert Dreyfuss has presented cogent and detailed analysis of U.S. ambitions to control oil resources in especially the Gulf region. See his excellent "The Thirty-Year Itch," *Mother Jones* pp. 41-45, March and April 2003.

⁸ Makiya and Chalabi have written in the British and U.S. press complaining about what they term as the new turn in US policy, while still keeping their trust and faith in the U.S. salvaging Iraq and installing them and their cohorts as its new rulers. See, Kanan Makiya, "Our hopes betrayed," *The Observer*, February 16, 2002; and Ahmad Chalabi, "Iraq for the Iraqis—After the invasion, leave it to us to establish democracy," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 19, 2003.

⁹ While it is true that the U.S. has secured sources other than Middle Eastern for their oil supplies, such as Canada, Mexico, Venezuela and Nigeria, Middle Eastern oil is particularly crucial for Europe and Asia, and it is thus the power associated with controlling oil resources that is critical.

¹⁰ Recent fiascos inflicting the financial markets, from the implosion of the dot.com bubble to the explosion of speculative trading and their corollary of inflated company stock values,

can only confirm that capitalist dynamism requires maintaining a secure manufacturing base. Notwithstanding intermittent surges of recovery, the systemic crises that have afflicted latter-day capitalism continue and manifest in motley forms: the current U.S. economic recession is not showing signs of recovery, and a war against Iraq, although costly in the short term—Washington hawks, however, hope to have Iraqi oil recuperate most, if not all, costs—could ultimately prove beneficial to the U.S. economy. This is so because the military-industrial complex, a specificity (overwhelmingly) germane to the U.S. economy, has become the focal point upon which most other industries rely for their continued survival, especially in hard economic times of low consumer confidence. If the military-industrial complex significantly benefits from war contracts, and if U.S. military presence spreads farther across the globe, industries as diverse as pharmaceuticals, packaging, hygiene products and processed food, to name but a few, will benefit, too.

¹¹ James Dao, “Battle Plan: Spare Iraq’s Civilians,” *The New York Times*, Week in Review, p. 1, February 23, 2003.

¹² Noam Chomsky, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” re-issued in *The Chomsky Reader*, pp. 59-82, New York, Pantheon Books, 1987.

¹³ Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence: War, Tyranny, Uprising and the Arab World*, p. 317, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1993. See my extensive review of his book published in *The Arab Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Autumn 1993, pp. 40-48 (ISSN 0965-8319).

¹⁴ Published by al-Saqi Books, London, 1991 [in Arabic]. Quotes are my translation into English.

¹⁵ Makiya in *Cruelty and Silence* uses, in the first part of the book while examining the status of invading Iraqi troops into Kuwait (partially relying on the testimony of a member of the Kuwaiti royal family), a behavioral approach to psychologically profile Arabs, and subsequently draw conclusions as to their level of intellectual sophistication, cultural savvy and, ultimately, civilizational development. Consider, for instance, this passage: “According to Arab customs of hospitality, guests are expected to make appreciative noises at the dinner table that greatly please their hosts. Belching, on the other hand, is the pinnacle of rudeness when seated at a formal English dinner. Yet one thing that an Arab man must not do in public is the very thing that in a Western setting is considered involuntary and excusable: Fart.” (p. 42)

¹⁶ The Iraqi Communist Party had tabled an appeal, adopted jointly with the New European Left Forum member parties, entitled: Stop the war before it starts, that incorporates points (2) and (3) above, as well as others. The interested reader may consult: www.iraqicp.org.

¹⁷ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, p. 93, in Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1991 revised edition.

Stephen Eric Bronner

Baghdad Memories

by
Stephen Eric Bronner*

We arrived in the middle of the night, smuggled into Iraq via the Jordanian city of Amman, and the cameras were already waiting. So were the president of the university, his entourage, some bodyguards, a few agents of the regime, and the organizers of what would become four days of activities in Baghdad. Half-asleep, in an empty airport lounge with postmodern arches, some talked with each other and others with any reporter willing to talk with them. More than thirty of us comprised “US Academicians Against War,” an independent group of intellectuals from twenty-eight universities and a variety of disciplines. Officially we were on a “fact-finding” mission, but we realized that a week in Baghdad was not very long, and that it would not turn us into experts. Our purpose, in reality, was different: we wanted a glimpse into the society our government was planning to blast further back into the stone-age and a chance to offer our solidarity with the Iraqi people though not the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein.

Holding on to the distinction between the regime and the citizenry, however, called for resisting temptation. We paid our own way. But from the moment that the motorcade accompanied the bus to our elegant hotel, where we were fed wonderful meals and given more than adequate accommodations, it was clear that we were being seduced. Totalitarian leaders have always liked inviting visitors who might give them legitimacy. Thoughts went through my mind of Aristotle seeking to educate Alexander the Great, Lloyd George and Charles Lindbergh extolling Hitler, and Ernst Bloch and Lion Feuchtwanger pandering to Stalin during the time of the great terror. Every other corner had a poster of the great leader: Saddam smiling benevolently; Saddam with a derby looking respectable; Saddam reading the Koran; Saddam holding a rifle aloft; Saddam with his arm outstretched in a fascist salute. It was important not to become a dupe: I resolved to keep my wits about me and remember what had originally inspired my visit to Baghdad.

Our hotel overlooked the Tigris River; I soon learned that Iraq possessed the Euphrates as well as the Greater and Lesser Zab rivers. The country had once even served as a granary and, given the desert-like character of the

surrounding area, control over this water supply would obviously prove of great importance in any attempt to reconfigure the region. So it occurred to me that, in fact, oil and water can mix very nicely. Dreams of power over these resources surely complement the desire of the United States to establish a fixed presence in the region. Iraq will also provide a precedent that will give other recalcitrant regimes an inkling of what is in store for them. It is time for the world to learn who's the boss. .

A visit to the Iraqi National Museum, by contrast, gave an indication of who is not. It was pitifully empty and we saw the impact of cultural imperialism: obelisks and artifacts from this cradle of civilization now sit in the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the edification of a few dozen connoisseurs and hundreds of bored brats on school tours. The famous Ishtar Gate of Babylon is in Berlin and the steele containing the Code of Hammurabi is in the Louvre: Iraq contents itself with the facsimiles as its humiliated citizens recall the glories of Mesopotamia and Ur, the city of Abraham, and the great Arab philosophers like Avicenna as well as Ali Baba. Better for Saddam to have organized a full scale legal war to bring these treasures back home—or at least be compensated for them—than the military adventures that had brought his people to the brink of ruin.

And the majority is on the brink of ruin. Other countries might be in worse shape. But there is no use employing what amounts to an algebra of misery: it was obvious that—here in Baghdad—things were bad enough. Many of the roads we saw from the windows of our bus were unpaved, sewage was spilled on the ground, jobless men sat on the corners, and emaciated animals ran around alleys. We learned that UNICEF had reported since 1991 a 160% increase in child mortality, arguably the most crucial indicator of public health, which constituted the greatest regression of the 188 nations surveyed. We also visited a hospital with rotting walls in which children lacked medicine, the new-born lacked incubators, and doctors said that they treated 150 patients a day. Then we were taken to the Al-Ameriya bomb shelter, the site where 400 women and children lost their lives in 1991. It was a stark underground casket preserved as a museum in which one can still see the twisted iron, the remains of bodies plastered against the walls, the blood of the victims on the floor and the ceilings. The United States claims the bombing of this shelter, which lies in a residential area, was a mistake. But that doesn't help the victims. This monument remains etched in my mind: it embodies the face of war and what these poor people might once again have to endure.

Iraq is not built on a war economy; its infrastructure is shot; it does not have the grandiose imperialist and racist ideology of the Nazis; it is not even potentially the dominant power in the region. The situation is not like that of Hitler during the 1930s when the famous policy of “appeasement” was applied. A better historical analogy exists: the period immediately following World War I. Just as the Treaty of Versailles insisted that Germany admit its “war guilt” and pay enormous reparations, so today, Iraq will be forced to take responsibility for its own destruction while oil profits will undoubtedly be used to compensate the United States. The Treaty of Versailles generated a new nationalism in Germany that undermined the Weimar Republic and fueled the Nazi movement. It is easy enough to imagine a postwar Iraq with irredentist longings, intensified hatred of the West, and contempt for what will surely become an American puppet regime.

Such developments might be avoided by simply carving up Iraq and creating a rump state. The United States will assuredly take control of the Iraqi oil fields after giving Great Britain its cut. Turkey has apparently been given a green light to occupy the Kurdish areas in the north and it has been offered \$15 billion as compensation for the stationing of American troops. Iran has designs, meanwhile, for a protectorate along its border. The potential for conflict between these two nations, and with a Kurdish people inflamed by nationalist yearnings of its own, should not be underestimated. There is no need for Iraq to exist within its present borders though, here again, resentment against the West and a politics of revenge would probably mix with a resurgent nationalism.

If Saddam and his henchmen could be ousted without devastating the country, creating a maelstrom in the region, causing an extraordinary loss of life, and totally perverting the international rule of law, then so much the better. But that seems unlikely. It has been estimated that in the first 48 hours 800 bombs will fall on Baghdad and 3000 on Iraq: genocide could result from what has been termed a policy of “shock and awe.” An internal memorandum from the United Nations estimating the costs of the war—an obviously minor detail still only scantily discussed in public by the Bush Administration—projects nearly a million refugees, hundreds and thousands of casualties, destruction of the infrastructure, and a proliferation of diseases. The impact on the economy of the region could prove devastating. There is even danger of nuclear war. Military costs and an American occupation, moreover, could reach into the hundreds of billions of dollars. As for

humanitarian aid, apparently, President Bush deems \$15 million sufficient. The casual way in which George Bush and Tony Blair are willing to gamble with the fate of an entire region and its inhabitants is unreasonable and imprudent, morally unconscionable and politically reckless. Opposition to the policies of the war mongers will have been justified even if they win their gamble.

The foreign policy of this administration has been a disaster from the beginning: its architects have refused to sign the Kyoto Treaty, denied the right of the World Court to judge Americans; undermined the improvement of relations with North Korea; created the deepest rift in generations with France and Germany; sanctioned the bloody policy of Sharon in Palestine; and generally acted as a bully ready to throw a tantrum should its wishes be denied. The United States is losing the moral high-ground it occupied following the collapse of the Soviet Union. World public opinion sees the only nation ever to have employed nuclear weapons, which has expressed its readiness to undertake a “pre-emptive strike” wherever it deems necessary, demanding war against Iraq for flaunting international resolutions pushed through at the behest of the United States and because that country *might* develop and then *might* employ nuclear weapons sometime in the future.

There is little reason to believe that the present policy will make the western world more secure against terrorism. We visited the Al-Kadihimia Mosque, the largest mosque in Baghdad, beautifully ornate and with a golden dome, and we found it packed on a week-night: we were told that just a few years ago it was empty. The bellicose policy of the Bush Administration is fueling the fires of fundamentalism and undermining the position of western-style liberals in the region. It is also producing an image of the United States as an imperialist war monger and, if Saddam really does have “weapons of mass destruction,” the circumstances in which—a war to the death—he will have the greatest incentive to deploy them. A boomerang effect, blowback, or whatever one wishes to call it, looms on the horizon. The present policy might well bring about precisely what it most seeks to avoid.

Saddam is a thug whose treatment of the Sh'iite majority and the Kurds has been ruthless and brutal. But the United States was willing to do business with him in better times just as it has been willing to deal with Batista in Cuba, Diem in South Vietnam, Pinochet in Chile, and Somoza in Nicaragua. In any event, the character of Saddam's regime became clear to us as we listened while a kindergarten class sang a hymn in praise of him, a

group of down-syndrome children pled for peace, and—far worse—some of his party loyalists gave a set of academic papers that made it abundantly clear how the authoritarian climate dulls meaningful discourse and casts a shadow over public life. No hint of criticism was expressed for the regime or any of its policies. Anti-Semitism of the old sort also cropped up in any number of conversations: even intellectuals often made reference to the existence of a Jewish conspiracy and the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Few knew about the Israeli opposition or even “Peace Now.” Just as the mainstream media in the United States has sought to identify Iraq with Saddam Hussein so has the Iraqi media sought to identify all Jews with Ariel Sharon.

Intelligent policies can't be built on stupid assumptions. The self-defeating character of such censorship and propaganda was obvious. New friends we met, in private, admitted as much. They were aware of their intellectual isolation. They criticized the militarism of the regime. They called for international organizations to monitor civil liberties. They knew what they were dealing with. But some of the best people in our party—a number were inspired by the Christian belief in good works and bearing witness—must have encountered different people with different views. They felt it was not our place to judge the Iraqi state, and believed that criticism would only undermine the antiwar effort. Others, including myself, disagreed. We argued. But we never lost our sense of common purpose. It was useful to recall the warmth with which we were greeted by so many ordinary Iraqis grateful for our visit and terrified by the thought of another war.

The final statement by our group should, in my opinion, have been more critical of Saddam's regime for exploitation of the misery caused by the sanctions; its corruption; its foolhardy militarism, and its assault on human rights. Ultimately, however, we were in Baghdad to show our solidarity with the citizenry and foster opposition to a looming war. We agreed on the need to clarify the regional implications and secondary effects that might result from the current policy, insist upon ending sanctions on non-military goods, and improve relations between the United States and Iraq. We were appalled at the thought of a “pre-emptive strike” and disgusted by a peculiarly American arrogance in the conduct of foreign affairs that reaches back to the Monroe Doctrine in 1812.

During the long plane-ride home, wondering how we would be received, I became angry thinking about our ever-narrowing national discourse, the shrill dogmatism of media pundits, and the cowardice exhibited by leaders of

the Democratic Party. We were returning to a country with a huge new agency for “home security,” new constrictions on civil liberties, and a mainstream debate that ranged from those ready to bomb Iraq right now to those willing to wait a few months before doing the same thing. “America! Love it or leave it!” and “My country! Right or wrong, my country!” I remembered such slogans from the time of the Vietnam War. But who were the real traitors: those who insisted upon continuing to send young boys to die in a hopeless war or those who sought to end that war?

It occurred to me that the same logic was now being used by those claiming that a UN resolution would somehow make an attack on Iraq more palatable even if the potential costs would remain the same. Just as being a patriot does not require agreeing with every action undertaken by the United States so is being an internationalist possible without supporting every action undertaken by the United Nations. Neither genuine patriotism nor genuine internationalism calls for turning oneself into a toady or an idiot. The words used by Rosa Luxemburg—that old libertarian socialist—in castigating Lenin and Trotsky in 1918 retain their validity today: “Freedom only for the supporters of the government is no freedom at all . . . Freedom is only and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.”

As we were landing, I felt ever more intensely that every person I had met—the television reporter who had lost her niece, the law professor who had lost her aunt and cousin, the handsome taxi driver who had lost some fingers, and the veterinarian who had lost his house—might be dead in a matter of weeks. If nothing else: this trip allowed me to put a face on what we so blithely term “collateral damage.” I thought of those young people, like those in my classes, who might lose their lives in this war. All members of our group, I think, were inspired not merely by humanitarian motives, but also by the genuine interests of the United States. We had done what we could. Perhaps we were naïve. But then, should this war be averted, it will have been because naïve people around the world had risen up in protest. It will have been because they insisted on peace rather than war and proved willing—in the famous phrase—“to speak truth to power.”

Iraqnophobia Versus Reality

by
James Jennings

Incredibly, in less than eighteen months, the Bush Administration has turned worldwide support for the U.S. following the September 11 attacks into the biggest foreign policy debacle since the Vietnam era. This administration's policies on Iraq have bitterly divided NATO, the UN Security Council, the American Congress, the European Union, and even the Arab League. It's an old joke in Washington that a politician's most embarrassing moment is when he (or she) inadvertently blurts out the truth. Both President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell were caught in such moments recently.

In his State of the Union speech, President Bush inadvertently mouthed a line written either by Condolezza Rice or some obscure White House speechwriter: "Iraq has great potential wealth." Exactly. That's the whole point of the aggressive US posture. It would be hard to imagine the US amassing 180,000 troops for a preemptive strike on Rwanda. It therefore turns out, if one examines the UNMOVIC reports and looks more deeply into the situation, that the present conflict is not really about weapons of mass destruction after all, despite years of hype from the Western media. Neither is it about oil or even wealth *per se*, but about the vision Iraq has for the future of the Middle East, as opposed to the vision the US projects.

The conflict is therefore about ideas—specifically political ideas. Consequently, the deeper conflict with Iraq cannot really be fought and won by bombs and missiles. It will have to be fought on the airwaves, on television and the internet. It is more about winning hearts and minds than winning territory. If that is so, and despite whatever happens on the battlefield, or even if there is a change of regime in Baghdad, the real front lines of the planned 2003 war are to be found in the field of communications.

The chief correlate of that proposition is that this is a long-term battle. It will not be over in 2003. The widespread belief that the 1991 Gulf War was a real war, and that it would settle the issue of Iraq, turns out in retrospect to be mistaken. Long-term observers of the Middle East know that The Gulf War was not so much a war as the first battle of a long campaign or series of wars. For the most part, people in the Middle East understood it that way from the beginning.

In that region events are measured in generations and centuries, not in quarterly phases as insisted upon by American corporations, or in two or four-year cycles as US politicians tend to think. Often in the history of the Middle East it has taken three wars in succession to settle a question, and sometimes not even then. Europe is not so much different, for we have the examples of the Thirty Years War and the Hundred Years War. And in our lifetimes we have endured a decades-long Cold War that ended not in a quick military victory, but a drawn out economic triumph. As far as the Middle East is concerned, "If you are not prepared to stay, then don't go," would be the rule taught by experience.

What are the ideas that drive the conflict with Iraq?

The Ba'ath ideology is not known very well to Westerners, but the essence of its philosophy is expressed in the title: "Renaissance." In short, the Ba'ath stands for an Arab Renaissance. On the surface there should be no objection to this idea from anybody. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights supports the concept that every group of people deserves to enjoy their own culture and celebrate their own history. On principle, a coalition of Arab States is just as legitimate as a European Union. But when it comes to history, there is a rub. To Arabs, the idea of renaissance evokes powerful political and territorial ambitions, ambitions that cannot but create fear and rejection from the West. The remembrance of an overarching Islamic threat to the West, present in some degree since the seventh century, may have faded during the latter half of the 20th Century, but still exists, and has been revived in large part at the beginning of the 21st Century by the methodology of terror exhibited by small bands of extremist Muslims.

A succession of Middle Eastern political leaders have created extraordinary fright in the West and have consequently been vilified as monsters, elevated

to archenemy status, and then destroyed. Generally the reaction has greatly exceeded the reality. It's true that their images, and especially their more prominent misdeeds, have been jarring to Western culture, making it easier for people in the West to hate them. For various reasons, beginning with Mossadegh in Iran in the period following WW II, there has existed a constant and bitter campaign of vilification waged against Arab and Muslim leaders in the Western press. Yet Mossadegh, a principled nationalist and democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran, was deliberately destroyed with the backing of the CIA in favor of restoring the anti-democratic Shah.

When the revolution against the monarchy took place in Egypt in 1952 it was the turn of the Arabs, with Nasser as the ideal bogeyman. Egypt was attacked in the so-called "Tripartite Aggression" of the 1956 Suez War jointly by Britain, France, and Israel; and again by Israel with US backing in 1967. Later figures like Khadafi, Arafat, Khoemeini, Saddam, and bin Laden have also inspired great fear, whether justified by reality or not. For Westerners, behind all of these figures has lurked the shadow of a greater nemesis, the fear of an incipient Muslim or, more narrowly, Arab renaissance.

The Persecution of Iraq

The U.S.-led policy of persecution against Iraq is related to these concerns. The American public has yet to face the appalling human cost of the catastrophic embargo against Iraq from 1991 to the present. The number of unnecessary and preventable deaths of children alone—credited by reputable and conservative public health specialists as in the hundreds of thousands—cannot tell the whole story. The economic, cultural, intellectual, and psychological damage to an entire society has been devastating as well.

The closest analogy to Iraq in the 1990's is Germany in the 1920's, when as a means of punishment the allies choked with trade sanctions and literally starved the German people for three years until the peace settlement was reached. Everybody knows what happened next, with the rise of Hitler and the Nazis. Yet Iraq has been similarly persecuted for nearly thirteen years. What kind of radical hatreds can we expect to arise from Iraq's youth in the coming decades? We only need look at the deprivation of jobs, nutritious food, education, health care, psychological counseling, and most of all opportunity to get some idea of the desperation of Iraqi youth. Viewed in this way, the future may well become a reflection of the past.

Among the things people in the West must do is learn to pay closer attention to the semantics and rhetoric of war: what is the definition of “Terrorist”? Who are the “Terrorists?” Why does much of the Muslim world call the U.S. and Britain “Crusaders”? What are “Weapons of Mass Destruction” really? Does a 5,000 pound bomb, deliverable from 50,000 feet half a world away count as WMD, or only a third rate military power like Iraq’s (possibly non-existent, and certainly non-deliverable) stockpile of degraded chemicals or biologicals? Yet there has been a constant barrage of fear-mongering and war-mongering against Iraq in the Western press. At some point the question needs to be asked whether or not such extreme “Iraqnophobia” corresponds to reality.

The worldwide revulsion against American leadership evident in the February 15 protests was not because of any great love for the Iraqi regime, but because of the realization by millions of people that Iraq has been unjustly persecuted for over a decade, and is being unfairly targeted for a new and unnecessary war. Typical of the protesters, said to have totaled ten million persons in 603 cities around the world, was the reaction of a Canadian veteran of the allied army of occupation in Germany of WW II. He said, “The US has always been my favorite country—but I’ve changed my mind. Now it’s France. Your government is lying too much. Why do so many Americans not see the truth?”

The Political Struggle for Domination of the Middle East

One way to gain insight into the political ideology behind the present conflict with Iraq is to view the iconography of the Ba’ath regime in Baghdad. In Iraq, mosaic art, paintings, monuments, medals, and coins sometimes depict a map of the all the Arab nations with Iraq’s president as the leader. This is wishful thinking, of course, but it is a wish that does in fact seek transformation into reality. The map extends from the Atlantic shores of Morocco all the way across North Africa to the Zagros mountain frontier of Iran. This is the Arab empire that used to exist under the

Umayyads and Abbasids, and which deep down every Arab heart still resonates to even today, even though it may seem far-fetched. History would seem to suggest that this construct is, and always will be, inimical to Western interests. Therefore it makes a certain amount of sense for the West to resist

any such rebirth of Arabism or, to an even greater degree, a resurgence of the transnational phenomenon of Islamism.

Yet, to deal again with reality, the present universal political system of nationalism works against such visionary ideas. With Middle Eastern countries having developed to a greater or lesser degree their own national identities over the last century, it would seem that political unification of all the Arabs, still less of all the Muslims, is an impossibility. The interposition of modernity, secularism, and materialism, along with the ideals of the American and French revolutions (which percolated very slowly into the Middle East over more than a century) offer strong countervailing trends.

That said, the way the West has chosen to offset any gains in Arab unity, such as those made by Nasser in his heyday, may be criticized as faulty and certainly counter-productive of good inter-regional relations. The US and Britain, followed to a lesser extent by France and at times by Russia, have generally sought to (1) destroy or marginalize any charismatic leader who may arise in the Arab world; (2) lure both small and large Arab states into various kinds of alliances with Western powers; and (3) most importantly, to follow the Roman Empire's maxim of *divide et impera*, which means, not "divide and conquer, as it is so often translated," but more literally "divide and rule."

Consequently, under this logic it becomes the task of the West, and particularly of its Middle Eastern colony, Israel, to follow a policy of breaking large states into smaller states, and small states into tribal and clan rivalries. This plan was implemented successfully and with utmost cruelty for more than fifteen years in Lebanon. Under conditions dominated by Israel following 1982, the Lebanese civil war was supported (largely passively), by the western alliance, and became a theatre of the Cold War due to inputs from Syria and its Soviet patron. The losers were the Lebanese themselves, the historically fractious ethnic and religious entities of the country. Eventually, following the end of the Cold War, Lebanon managed to re-constitute itself into an uneasy nation once more, but the rifts still exist and can easily reemerge.

Iraq is destined, if the U.S.-U.K.-Israeli alliance has its way, to be more or less permanently split into three parts. This despite the oft-stated position of the U.S. Department of State that Iraq should remain as a single entity. The lie is given to this policy line by the reality of the present "no-fly" zones

under CENTCOM. In the event of an American occupation of Iraq, there is little doubt that these lines will become realities on the ground as well. By no stretch of the imagination can it be said that the U.S. truly wants Iraq to both stay united and to be democratic. A democratic election for all of Iraq would put an Ayatollah Khomeini clone in power in Baghdad (since the Shi'a are in the majority) and likely ignite a civil war as well, for the Sunnis would not accept such a government. The Kurdish zone would also probably rise up in a new revolution and declare statehood. Since a long U.S. occupation is unthinkable, and leaving a vacuum in the Gulf is unwise, the best course presently is for the US to stay out of Iraq's internal affairs. One thing is certain: Iraqis will not accept a government imposed from outside.

Therefore the conflict with Iraq is not just about a single leader, or about specific armaments Iraq may or may not possess. It goes much deeper. It is an existential struggle for both the Arabs and Israel. The present gigantic world-encompassing political struggle (as seen in the mass February 15, 2003 protests all over the globe) must be understood as the Arab-Israeli conflict in macrocosm, the conflict having at last reached its climactic phase. Even so, this phase may—and likely will—be extended for many years to come before a final settlement is reached. The struggle for the domination of the Middle East, regardless of a potentially rapid U.S. victory in a second Gulf War, will not be over in 2003. It may in fact be just beginning.

Unfortunately for the coterie of swaggering hawks now in power in Washington, no one among them seems to have the prescience to see the issue in this way. For years it was steadfastly denied in Washington and by leading political pundits that there was any linkage at all between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the sanctions on Iraq. But in fact they are inextricably linked, exactly because of the collision of ideologies and Iraq's "great potential wealth."

A unique and spectacular opportunity for a way out of this morass has been deliberately ignored by the G.W. Bush administration. The most recent Arab League summit in Beirut produced the best offer for a comprehensive settlement Israel has, or is likely to, receive. Of course, the U.S. administration is not the only one that has acted arrogantly. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon insultingly refused even to read the peace plan for Palestine proffered by Israel's number one patron, the U.S., for a matter of a week, then curtly rejected it.

Comparing Rhetoric with Reality

The U.S.'s overall vision of democracy, women's rights, and free secular education for everybody in the Middle East set forth recently in one of Secretary Powell's major policy speeches is a noble one, capable of generating great enthusiasm from the western point of view, but is sure to run into incredibly high resistance in the region itself. In fact, it could be described as largely a pipe dream. The U.S. does not have a convincing record of providing a consistent supply of money and steady commitment to such schemes anywhere in the world, the Marshall plan excepted. Experienced observers of the scene believe that no such thing is likely to happen in the region short of two or three generations of strenuous efforts from progressive, pro-western elements within Arab society itself. At the moment, those elements are either not in control in the various Arab countries or hold power so tenuously that their survival is in doubt.

When it comes to weapons issues, one can ask why Iraq's nuclear file has been pronounced satisfactory by the IAEA (and incidentally also by the CIA, which says Iraq might have a bomb within eight years if an improbable series of contingent events occur), while a huge hue and cry continues to be made over chemicals and biologicals that have not been found? When do people take leave of reality and allow mass paranoia to set in? Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Cohen has stated that twenty five nations have these prohibited weapons. So far Iraq is the only nation on earth that has been inspected so intensively, and for years at that. A reality check is badly needed.

Chief UNMOVIC inspector Hans Blix quietly and neatly used a few verbal pins to burst the balloon of Powell's celebrated February UN speech, by revealing just how much of it is factually untenable. This on the heels of Tony Blair's own debacle, when a supposedly definitive British intelligence dossier was publicly debunked as being in fact a crib sheet from a California graduate student's outdated paper. After showing that the vaunted U.S. intelligence establishment was indeed putting the worst possible interpretation on its aerial photographs of the Ibn al-Haithem site, which could simply be normal activity, Blix intoned, "We have found no weapons of mass destruction." As quiet as his delivery was, it was nevertheless a dramatic moment—exactly the reverse of Adlai Stevenson's famous "gotcha" confrontation with the Soviets at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Frustrated, Powell threw away his prepared remarks and shot from the hip. He said, "Nobody likes war...but sometimes war is necessary to maintain world order." He might have said, "*The* world order," for that is precisely the implication of his remark. The "New World Order" seeks to impose political, economic, and military order wherever there is resistance or perceived disorder, all under U.S. hegemony, of course.

We need to ask, "What is that order?" And who exactly is threatening the peace and stability of the region? We need to be sure we are asking the right questions. The first of those questions should be the most basic one: "Have we in fact addressed the real problem in going after Iraq's presumed stocks of prohibited weapons? Or is it a dodge for a more fundamental objective, U.S. control of Iraq's "great potential wealth," and the preservation and extension of U.S. "order" throughout what is admittedly a tumultuous region? This order now includes the placement of U.S. military forces in Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, not to mention Columbia and all the forgotten places where U.S. troops are stationed as leftovers from WW II, the Korean War, and the Cold War.

Since the Bush Administration's agenda is being driven by the ideological right, it makes sense to listen to what they are saying. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, appearing at an American Enterprise Institute forum in November, 2002 along with Kaspar Weinberger and Jeanne Kirkpatrick, urged the clash of civilizations mantra: in his mind, the "green threat" of Islam has replaced the "red threat" of communism. Of course. How else could these people hope to maintain their power, except by scaring people with a bogeyman image of Islam which doesn't exist? It is true that radical Islamism presents a problem, no less to the Muslim countries than to the West, but this is a clash of political ideologies, and cannot truthfully be described as a "Clash of Civilizations."

When this approach was first bruited about in the wake of the Cold War, it was ridiculed as improbable, if not impossible. Events have proved otherwise, not so much because of a unified Islamic threat from Muslim states, which in fact doesn't exist, but because of small radical terrorist cells and the shock of their disastrous attacks on September 11, coupled with a swaggering response to the trauma by American policymakers. "Rather like using a sledge hammer to kill a fly," one lady remarked at the onset of the U.S.-Afghan war.

Soon after September 11, Pentagon planners began organizing for an attack on Iraq. Secretary Powell tried unsuccessfully to demonstrate linkage between Iraq and Islamist terrorism. Most European intelligence agencies remain unconvinced. Iraq is not al-Qaeda, nor is al-Qaeda Iraq. But the Administration's spokespersons keep insisting that the two are somehow connected in the face of the evidence. At least half of Americans accept the administration's logic, ill-informed and convoluted as it is.

Islam is multi-faceted, diverse, disarticulate, richly textured, highly internally conflicted, appears to be increasingly losing its grip on the young, and perceives itself correctly as weak. Only by concerted and repetitive blows from the outside can it be made to coalesce, and that with incredible difficulty. Yet that is what the policies of the G. W. Bush administration have already begun to effect. It hardly needs to be said that a different approach is needed.

Have we addressed the real problem?

The real problem in the Arab Middle East at the moment is twofold: one crucial issue concerns Arab identity, which involves the evolution of a viable and coherent ideology for the Arab peoples generally and in particular for the states of the Arab world. The other concerns regional security, and, potentially at least, international security as well. The first problem is internal, and can only be solved by the Arabs themselves. The 20th century saw wild fluctuations in political ideology, political systems, and the structure of political institutions throughout the Middle East.

For countries to move from monarchy to Fascism to radical dictatorships to abortive attempts at democracy to socialism to Communism to theocracy all in one century is quite a dizzying set of changes. While not every country went through such stages, all these ideologies were present in the region at one time or another during the 1900's. One of the underlying problems—perhaps the chief problem—of the region's governments is their lack of legitimacy. This in part explains the typical instability of many of the governments in the region, including that of Turkey and Iran. Turkey endured a severe wave of terrorism in the 1980's and an armed Kurdish revolt during the 1990's. The search for legitimacy became especially evident in the regional rise in Islamism following Iran's turn toward religious extremism under the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. The fact that student

riots, regional rebellions, and protests continue in Iran is a sign that even under the religious regime, true legitimacy is lacking.

What can the U.S. do about this issue? The answer: first, wish those countries well in their efforts to find suitable identities, establish workable political systems, and build sustainable institutions compatible with their own cultures. Secondly, stay engaged in ways many of USAID's most admirable programs have attempted to do over the last half-century. Third, encourage more and more NGO's to get involved in people-to-people programs (rather than mere "sustainable development," the current buzz phrase in international aid), which sometimes throws obscene amounts of money into schemes imposed from the outside, most destined to fail.

To his credit, President Bush said some of these very kinds of things in his speech to Congress and the nation shortly after September 11. Perhaps he counter-intuitively engaged a humane and knowledgeable speechwriter for that enterprise. Unfortunately, we have heard nothing more of this approach since that time, with the administration's preferred short cut, "brag loudly and carry a huge arsenal of bombs" taking precedence. The ongoing military drumbeat obliterates any thought of diplomacy or of an approach like that of the Peace Corps, which could lead the way to a more peaceful tomorrow.

Afghanistan is a case in point. Despite much high-flown rhetoric about wanting to help Afghans rebuild their nation, the U.S. continues to spend \$2 billion per month in Afghanistan for military purposes, but has only come up with three-quarters of a billion dollars for aid projects in the last seventeen months. That comes out to less than 2.5 percent of U.S. military expenditures for each month. Once again, as the Indians used to say about the Great White Father in Washington, "White man speak with forked tongue." At the international conference in Tokyo devoted to Afghan aid, the nations of the world pledged only \$5 billion of the \$15 billion needed to reconstruct Afghanistan. So far only about 20 percent of the amount pledged has been coughed up, and who knows if it will eventually be paid, or conveniently forgotten about? And, without much attention by the press, hostile attacks have gradually increased in Afghanistan until U.S. troops are presently receiving an average of one missile attack every day. Did someone say "quagmire?"

At the dramatic "Valentine's day" Security Council meeting of February 14, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell was pushed to the wall diplomatically

by the smooth eloquence and strong moral posture of the French Foreign Minister. Dominique de Villepin's statesmanlike speech instantly catapulted France into the position of leader of European, and world, resistance to U.S. hegemonism. Despite the fact that the French are constantly reviled in Washington as having no principles when it comes to Iraq, but only economic interests, de Villepin succeeded admirably in blocking the U.S. rush to war.

Refusing to be realistic or face facts about Iraq's supposed threat is itself a threat to the American body politic. Continuing to deal with political differences by the use of hackneyed and demeaning slogans cheapens discourse and leads to the easy recourse to violent "solutions." The American public eagerly swallows the line that the French are ungrateful, cowardly, and sleazy money-grubbers, the Arabs are liars and terrorists, but the Americans are noble and altruistic. Objectifying people in this misleading way led to the horrors of World Wars I and II. Diplomacy, if we will use it, can provide a way out. The United Nations system, flawed as it is, has helped protect the world from the nightmarish barbarities of the 1914-1945 period for more than half a century. It should be strengthened and encouraged, not ignored and overridden.

Dick Howard

Chances for a Left Foreign Policy

by
Dick Howard

A leftist (or “progressive”) American intellectual is expected to criticize his government.¹ That seems to be the reason that many Europeans were astonished, for example, to find the name of a Socialist intellectual like Michael Walzer co-existing peacefully with people of rather different convictions on petitions supporting the Bush administration response to September 11th. And when the progressive American speaks foreign tongues, it is expected that he will go on to deplore American isolationism—or unilateralism, or both, as sins of equal evil. He will be expected, in short, to be more European than the Europeans. Hence, let me say at the outset, in French, that “*tout comprendre n’est pas tout pardonner.*” And let me explain myself by adding, in German, a sort of Feuerbachian *Umkehrung* of Marx’s famous Eleventh Thesis: “*Die Politiker haben die Welt nur verändern wollen, es kommt aber darauf an, sie zu verstehen.*”

I will propose here some ideas toward elaborating a leftist approach (which is not simply an alternative) to current American foreign policy choices. But to do so, I must first criticize some interpretations of those policies because they use categories that describe foreign policy choices as they existed during the Cold War but are only apparently relevant today. I will then sketch an historical framework for understanding some constants in American foreign policy choices as part of a *democratic* political dynamic. In this context, the task of the intellectual changes; criticism no longer suffices. The difference between the left and the right is replaced by an opposition between democratic and anti-democratic politics. The progressive intellectual—and the Europeans who worry about the American hegemony—have to imagine forms of political intervention that encourage the openness of democratic debate while avoiding the anti-political temptations that are particularly strong in the sphere of foreign policy.

Are the old Categories still useful?

The first reactions to September 11th were that nothing would remain the same, that the old political clichés had lost their meaning, and that Leftist intellectuals could not simply repeat their hardy stance of opposition and the pacifist opposition to power.² Yet that cannot be true; change does not occur overnight. Geo-political relations remain over the long term; political cultures do not change in the blink of an eye nor do national habits. And recent surveys of public attitudes toward government or toward basic liberties show a remarkable constancy. (Indeed, one finds similar to reactions to Pearl Harbor emergency, save that Americans now are more tolerant of Muslims than they were then of Japanese.)³ Perhaps, as many Europeans told us, America was finally entering the real world, forced out of her narcissism and compelled to recognize that if she is a *primus*, she is nonetheless a *primus inter pares*, among equals. But that expectation has yet to manifest itself concretely.⁴

The political response of the Bush administration seemed to reflect the weight of habit. This was the unilateralist government that had refused to sign the Kyoto accords, denounced the ABM treaty that interfered with their dream of a missile defense, and were determined to eliminate Saddam Hussein regardless of the opinion of its allies. Those allies' invocation of Article 5 of the NATO treaty as an expression of solidarity was briefly noted and quickly forgotten as the Bush team took its own initiatives in Afghanistan, accepting token offerings from the allies while giving them no voice in return. Its attitude was summed up in Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's pithy remark that this time (as opposed to the haggling that almost crippled the intervention in Kosovo) that the mission would determine the coalition rather than the coalition determining the mission. The fact that Rumsfeld referred to a coalition, not an alliance, is significant: an alliance implies a shared global vision elaborated by consultation and deliberation among equals; a coalition is heteroclitic, uses its members as expendable "spare parts" to fill temporary needs. Similar disdain for multilateral cooperation was starkly evident in the recent decision by Washington to "un-sign" (rather than simply not send to the Senate for ratification) the Rome treaty creating an international court; at a time when the "war" on terrorism would seem to call for such a transnational institution, the Bush administration defiantly insisted that it would go its own way.

It may be that this picture of unilateral immobility is overdrawn; foreign policy is always a work-in-process that is subject to many different influences. Some of those influences are personal—and so the optimists remind us that Colin Powell remains secretary of State;⁵ and after many long months of silent cooperation motivated by fear of electoral backlash, the Congress, and the Democratic party, seem to be asserting their critical autonomy. There are other, external, influences, the grist of “realism” in foreign policy mills—which is why the intention of eliminating Saddam Hussein has been put on hold, and the U.S. has finally found it necessary to play a role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (even though it seems unsure what that role is to be, and how it is to be played, and whether it can influence either the Israelis or the Saudis). Still other influences are domestic and electoral—as when a free-trading president imposes steel tariffs to win votes in Pennsylvania and Ohio, supports agricultural subsidies for the same purpose in Iowa and Nebraska, or pursues an antiquated Cuban embargo in deference to votes in Florida (also needed to re-elect his brother as governor). It is hard to measure the weight of these incremental shifts, or the backlash that they could bring for example among supporters of a new round of global trade expansion.

Those who want to see an incremental learning process rather than immobility suggest that a president who had barely traveled outside the country, and a Congress whose majority leadership takes pride in its provincialism⁶ have abandoned the historical American politics of *isolationism*. Insofar as foreign policy played a role in the 2000 campaign, it was epitomized in Bush’s denunciation of so-called “nation-building” and multi-lateral interventions into the affairs of others.⁷ Thus, on taking office, the not-quite legitimate president broke with tradition by ostentatiously reserving his first visit for Canada, and his next for Mexico (neglecting England, and Europe). In this regard, a major victim of September 11th has been the agenda of intra-continental free trade: an expanded NAFTA, regularization of immigration with the new, democratically elected Mexican president, and regained fast-track trade liberalization authority (now euphemistically called “trade enhancement”). Commerce cannot replace politics, nor can it hide political imperatives. The tariff on steel products has harmed relations with a Brazil; Chile has received no rewards for its liberal economic policies, while Argentina confronts the results of a dollarized economy out of control. The war-on-terrorism has added complications to the early and simple agenda. To take a recent example, how can one decrease tariffs on tuna fishing for the drug-infested, unstable regime in Columbia

when this will create unemployment among the Muslim fishermen in the terrorist-harboring regions of the Philippines?⁸

In this context, it appears that the Bush administration has moved from isolationism toward a recognition of a multi-faceted world whose complexity it could not master. As a result, it has now sought to reduce this complexity by exerting unilateral control. Not for nothing does the U.S. spend more on national defense than the next 15 nations *combined*; not for nothing do the Americans tell their European allies: *modernize or be marginalized*. And whereas the Europeans protest and demand to be treated as equals, the recent signature of a new (475-word, ignoring, among other things, tactical weapons) missile treaty as well as acceptance of American withdrawal from the ABM treaty suggests that the Russia of Putin has understood the hard realities of a new American century. Europe, on the other hand, seems to be fulfilling the (low) expectations of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, who recalls bitterly his period as U.S. Ambassador to NATO a quarter century ago, in 1973-4.

But are these categories—*isolationism, multilateralism and unilateralism*—still useful for a characterization of American foreign policy? Isolationism has a long tradition; but it stands opposed to *both* multilateralism and unilateralism, which are themselves opposites. This duality leads to confusion; it conceals differences that, particularly in the new post-Cold War era, are politically important. Think of some recent examples. Unilateralism need not be the action of an imperial power snuffing out freedom as it works its will; it may be necessary when the wrangling of coalition partners prevents action at times when human rights (or lives) are in peril, as in Bosnia, Kosovo or recent cases in Africa. Multilateralism can be functional for the creation of a world of mutual interdependence whose members will reciprocally civilize each other's behavior; but it can also be a formula for pious words that make impossible practical deeds—as in the cases just mentioned. Even isolationism can have different meanings. It need not be the stance that wishes to hear or see no evil which is condemned to pay the price of its good-natured naiveté; non-action denounced as isolationism may be the recognition that not every problem can be solved immediately and that simple solutions cannot be imposed upon people unwilling or unable to admit them—indeed, there are problems that can only be solved after they fester for a time until the times are ripe.⁹

Categorizing Democratic Dynamics

There are good reasons, both geographical and historical, to repeat the usual description of U.S. foreign policy as congenitally isolationist. One of the founding moments of American democracy, George Washington's "Farewell Address," marks not only a recognition of the limits of political power in a pluralist society but contains also the warning to his countrymen to avoid "entangling alliances." This phrase, learned by every American school child, has become what Walter Russell Mead calls "the foreign policy equivalent of the Bill of Rights . . ." ¹⁰ One of the goals of Mead's remarkable new book, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*, is to show that, even before the creation of the new nation—indeed, as a political condition of its creation, which depended on French, Dutch and Spanish alliances—Americans knew, and practiced skillfully, the art of foreign policy. More than that, Mead's claim is that—as opposed to the contemporary stereotype—foreign policy has been one of the chief issues dividing the contesting political parties, at least until the achievement of a certain "mythical" *modus vivendi* with the outbreak of the Cold War. ¹¹

As opposed to the now-ambivalent categories inherited from the Cold War, Mead analyzes historically and illustrates pragmatically four currents associated with historical figures of the American past. The result goes beyond the dichotomy with which Henry Kissinger introduced his *Diplomacy*, when he distinguished the naïve idealism of Wilson from the hardened balance-of-power realism of Theodore Roosevelt. ¹² Mead's first category reflects the primacy of business and commerce throughout American foreign relations: *Hamiltonians* stress the alliance of government and business to insure stability at home and integration into the world economy. *Wilsonians* then introduce a moral dimension that wants to spread American values in order to create a peaceful world under the rule of law. *Jeffersonians* strive above all to protect democracy at home, and therefore avoid unsavory alliances by Hamiltonians and risks of war run by Wilsonians. Finally, populist *Jacksonians* insist that domestic and foreign policy must insure the security and well-being of the people; while they don't seek foreign quarrels, when war becomes necessary, these Jacksonians demand that it be fought to the finish.

Because of their historical specificity, Mead's categories are able to take into account the dynamics of political competition because, in order to remain the same, each of them must mutate as political conditions change. This

flexibility is double: it takes into account changed socio-economic conditions as well as the contending political parties. For example, the original Hamiltonian vision of the way to achieve the primacy of trade and commerce was formulated in Hamilton's "Report on Industries," which defended the protection of "infant industries" by means of a high tariff. Such protectionist policies could only be maintained at the end of the nineteenth century because protected industries still paid good wages and guaranteed secure jobs. By the middle of the twentieth century, however, American economic power meant that lower tariffs (i.e., free trade) would benefit the economy—but now wages and jobs came under pressure. If a new Hamiltonian policy was to be enacted, it would have to find new allies, perhaps among the (nationalist) Jacksonians, since its former supporters had gone either to the Wilsonians (the NGOs opposing exploitation) or to the Jeffersonians (attacking business power as a threat to democracy). Hamiltonian politics would, in other words, have to change in order to remain the same.

Mead's categories also permit the tracing of a multitude of potential cross-alliances in changing historical conditions. His account of the Wilsonians' "missionary spirit"—which antedated Woodrow Wilson—clarifies the status of his categories. This spirit was present at the foundation, when the colonists left the Old World to seek not only religious freedom but the blessings that accompanied it. Their heirs expanded this mission, taking their creed across the continents, and bringing in their wake government interventions that to the non-historian's eye could look like a new colonialism. But the Wilsonians had no monopoly on virtue; the Jeffersonian democratic creed not only competed with their moralism but warned against its excesses, fearing that such interventions could become a threat to the foundations of democracy.¹³ Where the Wilsonian might fight "a war to end all wars," the Jeffersonian would seek to negotiate, try to put off the moment of decision, or stand on the sidelines while cheering for the virtuous. But at this point, the temporary alliance of Jeffersonians with those Jacksonians who supported a democracy because it left them alone would come under pressure, since these populist westerners were slow to anger but fierce in self-defense once aroused. At this point, the Jacksonians' populism could turn into a patriotism that rejoins the Hamiltonians in defense of a national cause that holds together as long as neither side looks too closely at its own premises.

Leaving aside the historian's question of the accuracy of these classifications, they do seem to offer a recognizable picture of America. What is significant is that they do not coincide with actual party lines; they point rather to the

ingredients of shifting coalitions, and they can reflect different policy goals—or lead participants to change their policies (or to compromise) in order to maintain their original intentions. Mead attributes the success of American foreign policy to the competition among these basic categories; and he recognizes that the domination of one or the other would be harmful (which is why he dismisses at the outset the “myth” of the Cold War and a unified America for which only one policy is possible or just). His critics deplore this flexibility because it lacks predictive power; his thesis seems non-falsifiable because he can always explain *post festum* new combinations or splits and realignments.¹⁴ For example, Hamiltonians among the Clinton administration appealed to the civilizing effects of Montesquieu’s “doux commerce” while Hamiltonians in the Bush camp are more crudely pro-business. Wilsonians might well ally themselves with the former, who are making the world safe for their own (modern forms of) missionary work; but other Wilsonians would insist that globalization destroys the dignity of indigenous cultures. This second group could in turn find allies among those Jeffersonians whose fear for the fragility of democracy leads them toward isolationism. But the historical fact that Jeffersonian fear of big government led many of them to oppose U.S. entry into World War I, to reject the League of Nations and above all to appease of the new totalitarians in the 1930s discredited this orientation. What remained of their influence depended on an alliance with the Jacksonians, which disintegrated with the Vietnam War. Both tendencies were appalled by the effects of the war at home and by the corrupt Vietnamese government it defended; but the Jeffersonians wanted to cut and run, which, to the Jacksonian, was a violation of a code of honor that cut more deeply than the fear for the safety of domestic democracy.

Mead draws two conclusions from his analysis. The first is that the interplay of these four political tendencies account for the unquestionable successes of American foreign policy, including the victory in the Cold War. He wants his readers to learn from this history, and to recognize that foreign policy has been fundamental to the history of American democracy. The second conclusion is more contemporary and pragmatic. He suggests that the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian came together after 1989 to provide the basis of the New World Order, whose “the rise and retreat” he chronicles. Free trade plus globalization joined with increasingly powerful NGOs to pursue the creation of rule of law and the spread of democracy while protecting human rights. But this coalition was short lived; the other two tendencies affirmed themselves, and history did not come to an end, after all. What then of “the

future of American foreign policy”? Mead says: “I believe I owe it to readers to declare my preference among the schools.” His carefully hedged adhesion is to Jeffersonianism, whose “caution,” and “conservation of . . . liberty and lives, and . . . passion for limits” is said, finally, to be the ideal that motivated John Quincy Adams and James Monroe in 1823.¹⁵

I want to propose a different conclusion from Mead’s stimulating account. The constant interplay among the four categories that he describes means that none of them can uphold the claim that it has a monopoly on wisdom, that it expresses *the* unique national interest, or even that it expresses the *vox populi*. Mead’s analysis suggests that foreign policy success, particularly in the post-Cold War world, is not predicated on such (real or imagined) national unity; indeed, the totalitarian disasters of the twentieth century in the Soviet, German (and Japanese) cases resulted from just such unitary presuppositions. The task of the democratic intellectual is not to propose another vision of unity that claims to be superior to those failed attempts. That was the project of the progressive intellectuals who rallied to Jack Kennedy, only to find themselves unable to escape from their Vietnam nightmare because their politics was defined by the moral imperatives of Cold War anti-Communism. But their equally moralist left wing critics could only adopt an “anti-anti-communist” stance which had nothing political to offer, especially in the domain of foreign policy. Mead’s account suggests the direction in which to search for a new politics; although he doesn’t say it in so many words, democracy for him is not simply a means; it can also be an end to be sought in the post-Cold War world.

Political Dynamics in the Post-Cold War World

The end of the Cold War appeared to leave the U.S. alone on a world stage that had no overarching structure. Omnipotence was coupled uneasily with impotence, in the Balkans, in Rwanda, in the pious words and absent deeds of the Clinton years. In 1994, Henry Kissinger argued in *Diplomacy* that the ethical basis of the unity of American Cold War politics was useless in the emerging political-strategic world; American power was in fact limited and could be exercised only if it rediscovered the principles of diplomatic realism of which Kissinger claimed to be a master. Seven years later, in *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* in his first chapter, Kissinger posed the question:

“America at the Apex: Empire or Leader?” Empire, he argued, is not a policy; it confuses strategy with economics, while ignoring the political, cultural and spiritual impact of the new technological world. Leadership is exercised through alliances, such as NATO. An alliance differs from a guarantee of collective security, which is merely a juridical promise that, like a UN resolution, will not be carried out if major participants fail to act.¹⁶ Europe, argues Kissinger, could become merely a zone of collective security if America does not revitalize and repoliticize the NATO alliance. This is the more important since a unified Europe (either in the German Fischer proposal, or in the French multi-speed mode, or in Blair’s confederal version) would face the U.S. only once decisions had been made, at which point it would not be possible to revise them as a result of discussion with the Americans. Kissinger’s worry is clear, but his formula for leadership leaves no role for a European partner (only for European partners: *divide et imperia* is an earlier form of Kissinger’s favored *Realpolitik*).

Kissinger’s rejection of the old political concept of empire may be too facile (and self-interested); after all, the power and reach of twenty-first century America has no historical parallels. Recall the time when optimism about a Soviet revival under Gorbachev’s *perestroika* was widespread; historian Paul Kennedy’s best-seller, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (1987) convinced many that the result of America’s “imperial overreach” would be an inevitable decline. Today, Paul Kennedy has to admit that while Rome was limited by the Persian and Chinese empires, and the size of the British navy was equal only to the next two navies, the U.S. stands alone. More aggressively, the *Wall Street Journal* editorialist, Max Boot, writing in the conservative *Weekly Standard*, suggests that September 11th resulted not from foreign resentment at America’s action in the world but from the insufficient involvement of the U.S. in its true mission. In the same vein, Robert D. Kaplan, whose *Balkan Ghosts* (1993) was said to have dissuaded Clinton from his aggressive “lift and strike” option for Bosnia, drew a similarly a-moral lesson in *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos* (2001). If order is to be imposed in an anarchic world, the American cop will have to do the job—and he will be applauded for his work by willing masses already seduced by the pleasures promised by America’s vaunted “soft power.”¹⁷

What theorists of empire forget is that America acquired its hegemony without any specific political project other than its moral righteousness—the end of the Cold War was more a Soviet defeat than an American victory (an

arms-race-to-the-death, what the Germans call *tot-rüsten* rather than a duel of utopias). Indeed, Bush's national security advisor Condoleezza Rice wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 2000 that since the end of the Cold War American foreign policy seemed to have lost its direction.¹⁸ She was not alone in that analysis. But she is not alone either, today, in her revision of that analysis, whose new premise is that the post-September 11th period is "analogous to 1945-47," when the doctrine of containment was elaborated and made operational. But the author of the remarkable article that contains Rice's recent claim, Nicholas Lemann, puts her analysis into a broader and more worrisome imperial context, one that began under the direction of Bush père, aided by then-Defense Minister Cheney, who proposed its own hard-nosed vision of a post-Cold War world, only to watch with frustration as Bill Clinton—in the words of Condoleezza Rice's *Foreign Affairs* article—was guilty of "an extraordinary neglect of the fiduciary responsibilities of the commander in chief."¹⁹

The proposed post-Cold War imperial policy is often associated with the names of deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Vice-President Cheney. Its academic label was provided by Zalmay Khalizad (now American consul in Afghanistan): it is the passage from "containment to global leadership." This project, or vision, seems to have only become truly possible with the shedding of American blood on September 11th. However America acquired its hegemonic position, its rulers now intend to keep it, by all means necessary. And those means include pre-emptive strikes (possibly even nuclear²⁰), the redrawing of regional maps, and the intervention needed to create what is called euphemistically a "democratic zone of peace." Another, less euphemistic label for this project is proposed by Colin Powell's chief intellectual advisor, Richard Haass, who occupies the office first held by George Kennan, the father of containment theory. In an interview with Lemann, the State Department's Richard Haass suggests that there are "limits of sovereignty" that prevent governments from abusing the rights of their citizens; and there are legitimate interventions that prevent them from doing so. More important, such limits also prevent governments from supporting terrorism or from the production of weapons of mass destruction—whose possession legitimates "preventive, or preemptory, self-defense." Obviously, such a policy would have its first application in Iraq, permitting the son to fulfill the task left for him by his father.

But, are the proponents of such a policy right in thinking that September 11th will permit them to gain public support? The cynic might reply that the

manner in which this administration has used the metaphor of the war on terror to prevent not just dissent but even the questioning of its policies by members of the opposition (or by republicans like Richard Shelby or Dan Burton) will insure public support by its manipulations. What can the progressive intellectual do in the face of this onslaught? What can Europe do?

Turning first to the intellectual, from whose position I began this discussion, he is assumed to be a critic of the American policy. The stance of the intellectual as critic is an old one. During the Cold War, the progressive intellectual could only be a critic of one of the competing world systems, without reflecting on the manner in which his critique implied at least tacit support of the other system. In the American context, this meant that the left was “*anti-anti-communist*,” with the result that it had nothing positive to defend, no ideals to realize, no project for the future. Typical of this attitude was the oldest existing weekly journal of the left, *The Nation*.²¹ To put the matter differently, the leftist intellectual acquired the habit of finding all glasses to be half-empty; there was never any question of finding it to be half-full . . . and in need of further positive measures. As a result, at the end of the Cold War (if not before, which is another debate), the left had no contributions to ongoing political debates, and was blind to its Eastern *compagnons*.

But “the” left was and is (and should not be) so unified as these last remarks imply. There was an anti-totalitarian left too, one that contributed to the overcoming of the Soviet order. It was not so strong in the U.S. as for example in France. Learning from Eastern European dissidents who recognized the need to insure the rights and freedoms, this new left recognized the radical political implications of democracy—which is not simply another justification of capitalist economic exploitation. Although it was a minority among the left, this new direction (and its Eastern friends) seized upon Basket III of the 1975 Helsinki Accords, which conservatives denounced as a sell-out in which the West recognized the legitimacy of the Soviet imperium. Despite Henry Kissinger’s attempt to reclaim this achievement for himself,²² there is no reason for a progressive left to him take the credit and play the democrat. Why should the left not claim that the glass is half-full? There is no reason, for example, for a critical left not to agree with the State Department’s Richard Haass about the limits of sovereignty (although it might dissent from the possible pre-emptive nuclear strikes suggested by Paul Wolfowitz). The left should favor interventions to encourage democracy.

In this same context, one sees how the categorial framework of Walter Russell Mead offers a possible guideline for European political action as well. Two points in particular seem promising. If it is true that the democratic nature of American foreign policy depends on the constant interaction—call it checks and balances—of the four political tendencies, then Europeans should be on guard to insure that their words and actions do not favor the domination of one or the other tendency. Democracy in U.S. foreign policy is good for Europe as well. Second, the lability of the flexible categories, which can enter into various alliances at different historical conjunctures, suggests that European reaction to American actions needs to bear in mind that these policies are not the result of a single unified will expressing itself in the one and only form it can possibly take. American actions result from multiple interactions; the imposition of a tariff on steel, or the decision to intervene in Iraq, are not pre-ordained; they result from political coalition building, and there is no reason only to criticize when the fact that coalitions are built by partners means that the temporary alliances can also be drawn apart and reconfigured by sufficiently subtle approaches. In a word, as with the intellectual, Europe has to remember that, despite appearances, America remains a republican democracy, plural in its values and open to the future. It is a glass that only appears half-empty; if we understand that it is also half-full, we are on our way to realizing what Marx should have intended when he wrote the Eleventh Feuerbach Thesis, with which I proposed to begin this discussion of intellectuals and foreign policy.

Notes

¹The exception that proves the rule is the scandal that arose 50 years ago when *Partisan Review* published its famous issue, “Our Country and Our Culture,” in its May/June 1952 issue.

²This is of course not true for all leftist intellectuals—or intellectuals who think of themselves as leftists, as is the case most clearly for Noam Chomsky, whose blame-America-first politics have not changed since September 11th. In German, c.f. the pre-September article by Jörg Lau, “Onkel Noam aus dem Netz,” in *Die Zeit*, Nr. 31, 26 Juli, 2001, p. 29. More generally, c.f. the biting criticism of similar positions by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit,

published under the ironic title alluding to Edward Said's famous polemic, "Occidentalism," in *New York Review of Books*, January 17, 2002, pp. 4-7.

³C.f., Adam Clymer, "U.S. Attitudes Altered Little By Sept. 11, Pollsters Say," *New York Times*, May 20, 2002, p. A. 12, reporting on the 57th annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Attitudes toward gun control and capital punishment did not change; nor, despite the perception that religion had become more important for people, did patterns of church attendance. While the public did support some more restrictions of civil liberties, this was typical of past crises, and was expected to recede, as in the past. Nor was there greater support for an increased role of government more generally, despite predictions by commentators, including this one!

⁴Despite my own hopes immediately following September 11th. C.f., my articles.

⁵And Colin Powell too seems to think that he has been able to change the attitudes of the president, as he notes in a recent interview, pointing to Bush's having learned from the "bad handling" of Kyoto, and the lesson of patience in dealing with the Chinese after the downing of a U.S. spy plane. The latter case taught Bush to let his subordinates, including the State Department, "shape the situation for the president for a little while." C.f. David E. Sanger, "On the Job, Bush has Mastered Diplomacy 101, His Aides Say," in *New York Times*, May 22, 2002, pp. 1, 10.

⁶Texas Republican Dick Armev, the House majority leader, takes pride in never having traveled to Europe. Tom DeLay, the House whip soon to replace Armev as leader, has recently been voicing his misgivings about the Enlightenment. C.f. Harold Meyerson, "Axis of Incompetence," *The American Prospect*, May 20, 2002, pp. 18-19.

⁷There is a long and honorable precedent for this attitude, which is perhaps best articulated by John Quincy Adams, the theoretical force behind the creation of the Monroe Doctrine which long-guided American foreign policy after 1821. Sounding perhaps like the "compassionate conservative" that Bush wanted to represent, Adams wrote that "[w]herever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions and her prayers. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own . . . She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own . . . she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication . . . She might become the dictatress of the world. she would no longer be the ruler of her own spirit." It is worth noting that I am citing this passage from Henry

Kissinger's *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p. 238.

⁸C.f. the news analysis by Keith Bradsher, "Quandary on Trade," in the *New York Times*, May 21, 2002, p. W. 1.

⁹Isolationism can also take an aggressive form, as in the previously mentioned case of Chomsky, for whom whatever the U.S. does is harmful; or it can be adopted by his right wing political opposite, Patrick Buchanan, whose recent book is called *America, A Republic not an Empire*.

¹⁰Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence. American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World* (New York: Knopf, 2001), p. 59. I will make use of Mead's categories, but do so in a different context. Mead's concern, as his subtitle indicates, is to vindicate the success of a democratic foreign policy; mine is to look at the dynamic underlying that politics. Mead is a diplomatic historian who uses his framework to re-tell a coherent story, but his categories are too general to deal adequately with contemporary politics, as is clear in former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, James P. Rubin's review in *The New Republic* (March 18, 2002, pp. 29-33).

¹¹That this diplomatic involvement was not simply verbal or commercial is argued also in a recent book by *Wall Street Journal* editor, Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). Boot discusses what he calls "small wars" which led America in the 114 years before 1900 to undertake 184 landings on foreign soil. Mead's first chapter is a lengthy factual refutation of claims that America has always been isolationist and indifferent to foreign policy.

¹²Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994). In fact, Kissinger begins with a chapter on the post-Cold War "New World Order," that argues for the relevance of re-reading the history of diplomacy. He then presents Roosevelt and Wilson under the title "The Hinge," before returning directly to Richelieu, William of Orange and Pitt. Without overemphasis, Mead's book is clearly directed against Kissinger's European "realist" orientation. He suggests that once America became a dominant economic power, and particularly with the "myths" of the Cold War, the economic dimension of American foreign policy was forgotten and the image of an immature "isolationist" America that had now grown up could become dominant. C.f., chapter 3, "Changing the Paradigms."

¹³Mead assimilates John Quincy Adams to the Jeffersonian creed—despite the political differences that had separated Adams' father and Jefferson. Mead cites as one proof of his claim the same passage from Adams cited by Kissinger in Note 3, above. This would seem to imply that the

“compassionate conservative” Bush was also a Jeffersonian—despite his clearly Hamiltonian trade policies. But as was seen in the text, the modern Hamiltonians needed new allies—why not seek them out here, among Jeffersonians who, like everyone else, had to change their politics in order to remain consistent with themselves?

¹⁴This is the argument of James P. Rubin’s review, *op. cit.* (note 8, above). Rubin is unfair, however, in that he uses a series of newspaper columns published by Mead over the past decade in the *Los Angeles Times* to show the inconsistency of Mead’s own political analysis. This confuses the task of the editorialist and that of the political historian.

¹⁵Mead, *op. cit.*, pp. 331, 334.

¹⁶Kissinger was writing before Donald Rumsfeld had invented the above-mentioned distinction between an alliance that determines a mission and a mission that determines the alliance. One has to admit that Kissinger is, like it or not, an historically schooled thinker—which is not the case for the present regime. For a critique of Kissinger, c.f., Stanley Hoffmann’s review-essay, “Yesterday’s Realism,” in *The American Prospect*, July 20, 2002, pp. 33-37. Hoffmann argues that Kissinger “dodges the problem that has plagued realists ever since Morgenthau . . . Is there a clearly defined and delimited national interest?” His answer is that “[w]hile Wilson’s hyperbolic statements rejecting ‘a standard of national selfishness’ are easy to dismiss, his belief that this age requires us also to think about ‘the interest of mankind’ is not so easily ignored.” (p. 36) As I have suggested following Mead, Hoffmann too concludes that “on the whole, Wilsonians understand better than realists do: that what happens within a country is often more decisive than calculations of power balance.” (p. 37)

¹⁷For a summary of these arguments, c.f., Emily Eakin, “All Roads Lead to D.C.,” *New York Times*, March 31, 2002.

¹⁸Condoleezza Rice, “Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2000, pp. 45-62.

¹⁹C.f. Nicolas Lemann, “The Next World Order,” *The New Yorker*, April 1, 2002, pp. 42-48. The citation from Condoleezza Rice is on p. 51 of the above-mentioned article.

²⁰By a curious detour through primitive Afghan conditions: how to get to caves? How do dig deep? This is an example of a (coherent) logic run wild, a precautionary example.

²¹It is worth noting that, in the wake of September 11th, *The Nation* did open to more serious debate, for example between the still-consistently anti-

American Alexander Coburn and his more critical colleague, Christopher Hitchens, both Britons who have long written mainly in the U.S. left press.

²²C.f. *Diplomacy, op. cit.*, pp. 759-761. But Kissinger has to admit that without the dissidents there would not have been a break-through. It is worth noting that in this context, Kissinger brings up once again (p. 756) the above-cited passage from John Quincy Adams to explain his position—viz., to cheer on the dissidents while remaining on the side-lines.

Douglas Kellner

September 11, Spectacles of Terror, and Media Manipulation:
A Critique of Jihadist and Bush Media Politics

by
Douglas Kellner

The September 11 terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and Pentagon in Washington, D.C., were shocking global media events that dominated public attention and provoked reams of discourse, reflection, and writing. These media spectacles were intended to terrorize the U.S., to attack symbolic targets, and to unfold a terror spectacle of Jihad against the West, as well as to undermine the U.S. and global economy. The World Trade Center is an apt symbol of global capitalism in the heart of the New York financial district, while the Pentagon stands as a symbol and center of U.S. military power. In this study, I suggest how terrorists have used spectacles of terror to promote their agenda in a media-saturated era and how two Bush administrations have also deployed terror spectacle to promote their geo-political ends.¹

Terror Spectacle

Terrorists have long constructed media spectacles of terror to promote their causes, attack their adversaries, and gain worldwide publicity and attention. There had been many major terror spectacles before, both in the U.S. and elsewhere. Hijacking of airplanes had been a standard terrorist activity, but the ante was significantly upped in 1970 when the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, hijacked three Western jetliners. The group forced the planes to land in the Jordanian desert, and then blew up the planes in an incident known as “Black September” which was then used as a basis of a Hollywood film. In 1972, Palestinian gunmen from the same movement stunned the world when they took Israeli athletes hostage at the Munich Olympic Games, producing another media spectacle, which eventually became the subject of an Academy Award winning documentary film.

In 1975, an OPEC (Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries) meeting was disrupted in Vienna, Austria, when a terrorist group led by the notorious Carlos the Jackal killed three people and wounded several others in a chaotic shootout. Americans were targeted in a 1983 bombing in Beirut, Lebanon, in which 243 U.S. servicemen were killed in a truck bombing, orchestrated by a Shi'ite Muslim suicide bomber, that led the U.S. to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. U.S. tourists were victims in 1985 of Palestinians who seized the cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, when they killed Leon Klinghoffer, 69, a crippled American Jew, and threw his body and wheelchair overboard.

In 1993, the World Trade Center was bombed by Islamist terrorists linked to Osama bin Laden, providing a preview of the more spectacular September 11 aggression. An Americanborn terrorist, Timothy McVeigh, bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 and wounding more than 500. Al Qaeda had assaulted U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998 and a U.S. destroyer harbored in Yemen in 2000. Consequently, terror spectacle is a crucial part of the deadly game of terrorism and al Qaeda had systematically used the spectacle of terror to promote its agenda. But the 9/11 terror spectacle was the most extravagant strike on U.S. targets in its history and the first foreign attack on its territory since the war of 1812.

In a global media world, extravagant terror spectacles have been orchestrated in part to gain worldwide attention, dramatize the issues of the terrorist groups involved, and achieve specific political objectives. Previous al Qaeda strikes against the U.S. hit a range of targets to try to demonstrate that the U.S. was weak and vulnerable to terrorism. The earlier 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the embassy assaults in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole* in 2000 combined surprise with detailed planning and coordination in well-orchestrated, high-concept terror spectacle.

Terrorism thus works in part through spectacle, using dramatic images and montage to catch attention, hoping thereby to catalyze unanticipated events that will spread further terror through domestic populations. The September 11 terror spectacle looked like a disaster film, leading Hollywood director Robert Altman to chide his industry for producing extravaganzas of terror that could be used as models for attacking the country. Was *Independence Day* (1996) the template for the disaster in which Los Angeles and New York were attacked by aliens and the White House was destroyed? The collapse of

the WTC indeed had resonances of *The Towering Inferno* (1975) that depicted a high-rise building catching on fire, burning and collapsing, or even *Earthquake* (1975) that depicted the collapse of entire urban environments.

The novelty of the September 11 terror acts resulted from the combination of airplane hijacking and the use of airplanes to crash into buildings and disrupt and wound urban and economic life. The targets were partly symbolic, representing global capital and American military power, and partly material, intending to disrupt the airline industry, the businesses centered in downtown New York, and perhaps the global economy itself through potentially dramatic downturns of the world's largest stock market and primary financial center. Indeed, as a response to the drama of the terror spectacle, an unparalleled shutdown occurred in New York, Washington, and other major cities throughout the U.S., with government and businesses closing up for the day and the airline system canceling all flights. Wall Street and the stock market were shut down for days, baseball and entertainment events were postponed, Disneyland and Walt Disney World were closed, McDonald's locked up its regional offices, and most major U.S. cities became eerily quiet.

Post-9/11 Media Spectacle

The 9/11 terror spectacle unfolded in a city that is one of the most media-saturated in the world, and that played out as a deadly drama live on television. The images of the planes hitting the towers and their collapse were played repeatedly. The spectacle conveyed the message that the U.S. was vulnerable to terror attack, that terrorists could create great harm, and that anyone at anytime could be subject to a violent terror attack, even in "Fortress America." The suffering, fear, and death that many people endure on a daily basis in violent and insecure situations in other parts of the world was brought home to U.S. citizens. The terror attacks thus had material effects, attempting to harm the U.S. and global economy, and psychic effects, traumatizing a nation with fear. The spectacle of terror was broadcast throughout the global village, with the whole world watching the assault on the U.S. and New York's attempts to cope with the attacks.²

The live television broadcasting brought a "you are there" drama to the September 11 spectacle. The images of the planes striking the World Trade

Center, the buildings bursting into flames, individuals jumping out of the window in a desperate attempt to survive the inferno, and the collapse of the towers and subsequent chaos provided unforgettable images, much like the footage of the Kennedy assassination, photographs of Vietnam, the 1986 explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger*, or the death of Princess Diana and young JFK Jr. in the 1990s.

The September 11 terror attacks in New York were claimed to be “the most documented event in history” in the May 2002 HBO film, *In Memoriam*, which itself provided a collage of images assembled from professional news crews, documentary filmmakers, and amateur videographers and photographers who in some cases risked their lives to document the event. As with other major media spectacles, the September 11 terror spectacle took over TV programming for the next three days without commercial break as the major television networks focused on the attack and its aftermath.³

There followed a media spectacle of the highest order. For several days, U.S. television suspended broadcasting of advertising and TV entertainment and focused solely on the momentous events of September 11. In the following analysis, I want to suggest how the images and discourses of the U.S. television networks framed the terrorist attacks to whip up war hysteria, while failing to provide a coherent account of what happened, why it happened, and what would count as responsible responses. In an analysis of the dominant discourses, frames, and representations that informed the media and public debate in the days following the September 11 terrorist attacks, I will show how the mainstream media in the United States privileged the “clash of civilizations” model, established a binary dualism between Islamic terrorism and civilization, and largely circulated war fever and retaliatory feelings and discourses that called for and supported a form of military intervention. I argue that such one-dimensional militarism could arguably make the current crisis worse, rather than providing solutions to the problem of global terrorism. Thus, while the media in a democracy should critically debate urgent questions facing the nation, in the terror crisis the mainstream U.S. corporate media, especially television, promoted war fever and military solutions to the problem of global terrorism.

On the day of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the networks brought out an array of national security state intellectuals, usually ranging from the right to the far right, to explain the horrific events of September 11. The Fox Network presented former UN Ambassador and

Reagan administration apologist Jeane Kirkpatrick, who rolled out a simplified version of Huntington's clash of civilizations, arguing that we were at war with Islam and should defend the West. Kirkpatrick was the most discredited intellectual of her generation, legitimating Reagan administration alliances with unsavory fascists and terrorists as necessary to beat Soviet totalitarianism. Her 1980s propaganda line was premised on a distinction between fascism and communist totalitarianism which argued that alliances with authoritarian or right-wing terrorist organizations or states were defensible since these regimes were open to reform efforts or historically undermined themselves and disappeared. Soviet totalitarianism, by contrast, should be resolutely opposed since a communist regime had never collapsed or been overthrown and communism was an intractable and dangerous foe, which must be fought to the death with any means necessary. Of course, the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, along with its empire, and although Kirkpatrick was totally discredited, she was awarded a professorship at Georgetown University and allowed to continue to circulate her misguided views.

On the afternoon of September 11, Ariel Sharon, prime minister of Israel, himself implicated in war crimes in Sabra and Shatilla in Lebanon in 1982, came on television to convey his regret, condolences, and assurance of Israel's support in the war on terror. Sharon called for a coalition against terrorist networks, which would contrast the civilized world with terrorism, representing the Good vs. Evil, "humanity" vs. "the blood-thirsty," "the free world" against "the forces of darkness," who are trying to destroy "freedom" and our "way of life."

Curiously, the Bush Administration would take up the same tropes with Bush attacking the "evil" of the terrorists, using the word five times in his first statement on the September 11 terror assaults, and repeatedly portraying the conflict as a war between good and evil in which the U.S. was going to "eradicate evil from the world," "smoke out and pursue . . . evil doers, those barbaric people." The insensitive semantics of the Bush Administration also used cowboy metaphors, calling for bin Laden "dead or alive," and described the campaign as a "crusade," until he was advised that this term carried offensive historical baggage of earlier wars of Christians and Muslims. And the Pentagon at first named the war against terror "Operation Infinite Justice," until they were advised that only God could dispense "infinite justice," and that Americans and others might be troubled about a war expanding to infinity.

Disturbingly, in mentioning the goals of the war, Bush never mentioned “democracy,” and the new name for the campaign became “Operation Enduring Freedom.” The Bush Administration mantra became: the war against terrorism is being fought for “freedom.” But we know from the history of political theory and history itself that freedom must be paired with equality, or concepts like justice, rights, or democracy, to provide adequate political theory and legitimation for political action. It is precisely the contempt for democracy and self-autonomy that has characterized U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East for the past decades, which is a prime reason why groups and individuals in the area passionately hate the United States.

In his speech to Congress on September 20 declaring his war against terrorism, Bush described the conflict as a war between freedom and fear, between “those governed by fear” who “want to destroy our wealth and freedoms,” and those on the side of freedom. Yet “freedom” for Bush has usually signaled the capacity to say and do anything he wanted to, in a lifetime of providing deregulation of the economy, favors to his corporate supporters, and participation himself in dubious political and economic activities. The “Bush doctrine” in foreign policy has signified freedom for the U.S. to wage preemptive strikes anywhere it wishes at any time, and the unilateralist Bush administration foreign policy has signified freedom from major global treaties ranging from Kyoto to every conceivable international effort to regulate arms and military activity (see Kellner 2001 and 2003).

And while Bush ascribed “fear” to its symbolic other and enemy, as Michael Moore’s film *Bowling for Columbine* demonstrates, the corporate media has been exploiting fear for decades in their excessive presentation of murder and violence and dramatization of a wide range of threats from foreign enemies and within everyday life. Clearly, the media whipped up hysteria in its post-9/11 coverage of anthrax attacks and frequent reports of terrorist threats, and since September 11 the Bush administration has arguably used fear tactics to advance its political agenda, including tax breaks for the rich, curtailment of social programs, military build-up, and the most draconian assaults on U.S. rights and freedoms in the contemporary era.

In his September 20 talk to Congress, Bush also drew a line between those who supported terrorism and those who were ready to fight it. Stating that “you’re either with us or against us,” Bush declared war on any states

supporting terrorism and laid down a series of non-negotiable demands to the Taliban who ruled Afghanistan, while Congress wildly applauded. Bush's popularity soared with a country craving blood-revenge and the head of Osama bin Laden. Moreover, Bush also asserted that his administration held accountable those nations who supported terrorism—a position that could nurture and legitimate military interventions for years to come.

Interestingly, Bush Administration discourses, like those of bin Laden and radical Islamists, are fundamentally Manichean, positing a binary opposition between Good and Evil, Us and Them, civilization and barbarism. Bush's Manichean dualism replicates as well the Friend/Enemy opposition of Carl Schmidt upon which Nazi politics were based. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda provided the face of an enemy to replace the "evil Empire" of Soviet Communism which was the face of the Other in the Cold War. The terrorist Other, however, does not reside in a specific country with particular military targets and forces, but is part of an invisible empire supported by a multiplicity of groups and states. This amorphous terrorist Enemy, then, allows the crusader for Good to attack any country or group that is supporting terrorism, thus promoting a foundation for a new doctrine of preemptive strikes and perennial war.

The discourse of Good and Evil can be appropriated by disparate and opposing groups and generates a highly dichotomous opposition, outside the discourses of democratic communication and consensus, and provoking violent and military responses. It is assumed by both sides that "we" are the good, and the "Other" is wicked, an assertion that Bush made in his incessant assurance that the "evil-doers" of the "evil deeds" will be punished, and that the "Evil One," will be brought to justice, implicitly equating bin Laden with Satan.

Such hyperbolic rhetoric is a salient example of Bushspeak that communicates through codes to specific audiences, in this case domestic Christian right-wing groups that are the preferred subjects of his discourse. But demonizing terms for bin Laden both elevate his status in the Arab world as a superhero who stands up to the West, and angers those who feel such discourse is insulting. Moreover, the trouble with the discourse of "evil" is that it is totalizing and absolutist, allowing no ambiguities or contradictions. The discourse of evil is also cosmological and apocalyptic, evoking a cataclysmic war with cosmic stakes. On this perspective, Evil cannot simply be attacked one piece at a time through incremental steps, but it must be

totally defeated, eradicated from the earth if Good is to reign. This discourse of evil raises the stakes and violence of conflict and nurtures more apocalyptic and catastrophic politics, fuelling future cycles of hatred, violence, and wars.

Furthermore, the Bushspeak dualisms between fear and freedom, barbarism and civilization, and the like can hardly be sustained in empirical and theoretical analysis of the contemporary moment. In fact, there is much fear and poverty in “our” world and wealth, and freedom and security in the Arab and Islamic worlds—at least for privileged élites. No doubt, freedom, fear, and wealth are distributed in both worlds, so to polarize these categories and to make them the legitimating principles of war is highly irresponsible. And associating oneself with “good,” while making one’s enemy “evil,” is another exercise in binary reductionism and projection of all traits of aggression and wickedness onto the “Other” while constituting oneself as good and pure.

It is, of course, theocratic Islamic fundamentalists who themselves engage in a similar simplistic binary discourse which they use to legitimate acts of terrorism. For certain Manichean Islamic fundamentalists, the U.S. is evil, the source of all the world’s problems and deserves destruction. Such one-dimensional thought does not distinguish between U.S. policies, people, or institutions, while advocating a jihad, or holy war, against the American evil. The terrorist crimes of September 11 appeared to be part of this jihad and the monstrousness of the actions of killing innocent civilians shows the horrific consequences of totally dehumanizing an “enemy” deemed so evil that even innocent members of the group in question deserve to be exterminated.

Many commentators on U.S. television offered similarly one-sided and Manichean accounts of the cause of the September 11 events, blaming their favorite opponents in the current U.S. political spectrum as the source of the terror assaults. For fundamentalist Christian ideologue Jerry Falwell, and with the verbal agreement of Christian Broadcast Network President Pat Robertson, the culpability for this “horror beyond words” fell on liberals, feminists, gays and the ACLU. Jerry Falwell said, and Pat Robertson agreed, that “the abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy forty million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way—all of them who have tried to secularize America—I point the finger in their face and say, ‘You helped this happen.’ ” In fact, this argument is similar to a

right-wing Islamic claim that the U.S. is fundamentally corrupt and evil and thus deserves God's wrath, an argument made by Falwell critics that forced the fundamentalist fanatic to apologize.

For right-wingers, like Gary Aldrich the president and founder of the Patrick Henry Center, it was the liberals who were at fault: "Excuse me if I absent myself from the national political group-hug that's going on. You see, I believe the liberals are largely responsible for much of what happened Tuesday, and may God forgive them. These people exist in a world that lies beyond the normal standards of decency and civility." Other rightists, like Rush Limbaugh, argued incessantly that it was all Bill Clinton's fault, and election-thief manager James Baker (see Kellner 2001) blamed the catastrophe on the 1976 Church report that put limits on the CIA.

On the issue of "what to do," right-wing columnist Ann Coulter declaimed: "We know who the homicidal maniacs are. They are the ones cheering and dancing right now. We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity."⁴ While Bush was declaring a "crusade" against terrorism and the Pentagon was organizing "Operation Infinite Justice," Bush Administration Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said the administration's retaliation would be "sustained and broad and effective" and that the United States "will use all our resources. It's not just simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending states who sponsor terrorism."

Such all-out war hysteria was the order of the day, and throughout September 11 and its aftermath, ideological war-horses like William Bennett came out and urged that the U.S. declare war on Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, and whoever else harbored terrorists. On the Canadian Broadcasting Network, former Reagan administration Deputy Secretary of Defense and military commentator Frank Gaffney suggested that the U.S. needed to go after the sponsors of these states as well, such as China and Russia, to the astonishment and derision of the Canadian audience. And right-wing talk radio and the Internet buzzed with talk of dropping nuclear bombs on Afghanistan, exterminating all Muslims, and whatever other fantasies popped into people's unhinged heads.

Hence, broadcast television allowed dangerous and arguably deranged zealots to vent and circulate the most aggressive, fanatic, and downright lunatic

views, creating a consensus around the need for immediate military action and all-out war. The television networks themselves featured logos such as “War on America,” “America’s New War,” and other inflammatory slogans that assumed that the U.S. was at war and that only a military response was appropriate. I saw few cooler heads on any of the major television networks that repeatedly beat the war drums day after day, without even the relief of commercials for three days straight, driving the country into hysteria and making it certain that there would be a military response and war.

Radio broadcasts were even more frightening. Not surprisingly, talk radio oozed hatred and hysteria, calling for violence against Arabs and Muslims, demanding nuclear retaliation, and global war. As the days went by, even mainstream radio news became hyperdramatic, replete with music, patriotic gore, and wall-to-wall terror hysteria and war propaganda. National Public Radio, Pacifica, and some discussion programs attempted rational discussion and debate, but on the whole, radio was all propaganda, all the time.

There is no question concerning the depth of emotion and horror with which the nation experienced this serious assault on U.S. territory by its enemies. The constant invocation of analogies to “Pearl Harbor” inevitably elicited a need to strike back and prepare for war. The attack on the World Trade Center evoked images of assault on the very body of the country, while the attack on the Pentagon represented an assault on the country’s defense system, showing the vulnerability, previously unperceived, of the U.S. to external attack and terror.

For some years, an increasing amount of “expert consultants” were hired by the television corporations to explain complex events to the public. The military consultants hired by the networks had close connections to the Pentagon and usually would express the Pentagon’s point of view and spin of the day, making them more propaganda conduits for the military than independent analysts. Commentators and Congressmen, like John McCain (R-Ariz.), Henry Kissinger, James Baker, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and other long-time advocates of the military-industrial complex, described the attacks as an “act of war” immediately on September 11 and the days following. For hawkish pundits, the terror attacks required an immediate military response and dramatic expansion of the U.S. military. Many of these hawks were former government officials, like Kissinger and Baker, who were currently tied into the defense industries, guaranteeing that their punditry would be paid for by large profits of the defense industries that they were part of.

Indeed, the Bush family, James Baker and other advocates of large-scale military retribution were connected with the Carlyle Fund, the largest investor in military industries in the world. Consequently, these advocates of war would profit immensely from sustained military activity, an embarrassment rarely mentioned on television or the mainstream press, but that was widely discussed in alternative media and the Internet.⁵

The network anchors also framed the event as a military attack, with Peter Jennings of ABC stating that “the response is going to have to be massive if it is to be effective.” NBC, owned by General Electric, the largest U.S. military corporation, as usual promoted military action, and its talk shows were populated by pundits who invariably urged immediate military retribution. To help generate and sustain widespread public desire for military intervention, the networks played show after show detailing the harm done to victims of the bombing, kept their cameras aimed at Ground Zero to document the damage and destruction and drama of discovery of dead bodies, and constructed report after report on the evil of bin Laden and the al Qaeda terrorists who had committed the atrocities.

To continue the sense of drama and urgency, and to ensure that viewers kept tuned into the story and their channels, the television cable news networks all added “Crawlers” to the bottom of their screens, endlessly repeating bulletins of the latest news highlighting the terrorist attack and its consequences. It was remarkable, in fact, how quickly the media corporations produced frames for the event, constructed it as it was going on, and provided innovative and striking visuals and graphics to capture viewer attention. Already on September 11, CNN constructed a four-tier graphic presentation with a capitalized and blazing BREAKING NEWS title on the top of their screen, followed by a graphic describing the ATTACK ON AMERICA, or whatever slogan was being used to construct the event. Next, a title described what was being currently portrayed in the visuals flashed across the screen, with the crawlers scrolling the headlines on the bottom. In a remarkable presentation of the talk of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on September 11, for instance, the visuals were split between Sharon’s picture in Tel Aviv, images of the World Trade Center bomb site, and the graphics summarizing Sharon’s talk and the headlines crawling along the bottom of the screen. While the Bush Administration obviously had no idea what was happening to the U.S. as Bush’s presidential plane frantically flew around the country and Vice-President Dick Cheney was carried off to the mountains to hide, the TV networks were fully in control with frames, discourses, and

explanations of the momentous events. It was a tremendous formal accomplishment for the high-tech flash visual production capabilities of the networks, although one could question the intelligence of the interpretations, or the military retribution being fervently espoused without contradiction.

Bush Administration Media Spectacle

War itself has become a media event in which subsequent U.S. administrations have used military spectacle to prop up their agendas. The Reagan administration repeatedly used military spectacle to deflect attention from its foreign policy and economic problems and two Bush Administrations and the Clinton Administration famously “wagged the dog,” using military spectacle to deflect attention from embarrassing domestic or foreign policy blunders, or in Clinton’s case, a sex scandal that threatened him with impeachment (Kellner 2003).

The Gulf War of 1990-1991 was the major media spectacle of its era, captivating global audiences, and seemed to save the first Bush Presidency before its ambiguous outcome and a declining economy defeated the Bush presidential campaign of 1992. In the summer of 1990, George Bush’s popularity was declining; he had promised “no new taxes” and then raised taxes, and it appeared that he would not be re-elected. Bush’s salvation seemed to appear in the figure of Saddam Hussein, whom Bush had supported during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988, and who continued to provide loans and programs that enabled Hussein to build up his military during Bush’s presidency (Kellner 1992).

When Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990, Bush mobilized an international coalition to wage war to oust Iraq from its neighboring oil emirate. Bush refused serious diplomatic efforts to induce Iraq to leave and appeared to want a war to increase U.S. power in the region, to promote U.S. military power as the dominant global police force, to save his own failing political fortunes, and to exert more U.S. influence over oil supplies and policies (Kellner 1992). The televised drama of the Gulf War provide exciting media spectacles that engrossed a global audience and that seemed to ensure Bush’s re-election (he enjoyed 90 percent popularity at the end of the war).

After the war, in an exuberant rush of enthusiasm, Bush and his national security advisor Brent Scowcroft proclaimed a “New World Order” in which U.S. military power would be used to settle conflicts, solve problems, and assert the U.S. as the hegemonic force in the world. Such a dream was not (yet) to be, however, as the Gulf War peace negotiations allowed Saddam Hussein to stay in power and the U.S. failed to aid Shi’ite forces in the south and Kurds in the north of Iraq to overthrow Hussein. Images of the slaughter of Kurds and Shi’ites throughout the global media provided negative images that helped code the Gulf War as a failure, or extremely limited success, and that negative spectacle of failure combined with a poor economy helped defeat Bush in 1992.

At the time of the September 11 terror attacks, George W. Bush faced the same failing prospects that his father confronted in the summer of 1990. The economy was suffering one of the worst declines in U.S. history, and after ramming through a right-wing agenda on behalf of the corporations that had supported his 2000 election (Kellner 2001), Bush lost control of the political agenda when a Republican senator, James Jeffords, defected to the Democrats in May 2001. But the September 11 terror attacks provided an opportunity for Bush to re-seize political initiative and to boost his popularity.

The brief war against the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan from early October through December 2001 appeared to be a military victory for the U.S., as after a month of stalemate following relentless U.S. bombing, the Taliban collapsed in the north of the country, abandoned the capital, Kabul, and surrendered in its southern strongholds. Yet the Afghanistan Terror War, like George Bush’s Gulf War, was ambiguous in its outcome. Although the Taliban regime which hosted Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda collapsed under U.S. military pressure, the top leaders and many militants of al Qaeda and the Taliban escaped, and the country remains dangerous and chaotic.

While the Gulf War produced spectacles of precision-bombs and missiles destroying Iraqi targets and the brief spectacle of the flight of the Iraqis from Kuwait and the liberation of Kuwait City, the war in Afghanistan was more ambiguous and hidden in its unfolding and effects. Many of the images of Afghanistan that circulated through the global media were of civilian casualties caused by U.S. bombing and daily pictures of thousands of refugees raised questions concerning the U.S. strategy and intervention. Moreover,

just as the survival of Saddam Hussein ultimately coded the Gulf War as problematic, so do did the continued existence of Osama bin Laden and his top al Qaeda leadership point to limitations of Bush's leadership and policies.

Thus, by early 2002, Bush faced a situation similar to that of his father after the Gulf War. Despite victory against the Taliban, the limitations of the war and a failing economy provided a situation that threatened Bush's re-election. Thus George W. Bush needed a dramatic media spectacle that would guarantee his election, and once more Saddam Hussein provided a viable candidate. Consequently, in his January 20, 2002, State of the Union address, Bush made threatening remarks about an "axis of evil" confronting the U.S., including Iraq, Iran, and North Korea.

As 2002 unfolded, the Bush administration intensified its ideological war against Iraq, advanced its doctrine of preemptive strikes, and provided military build-up for what now looks like an inevitable war against Iraq. While the explicit war aims are to shut down Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction," and thus enforce UN resolutions which mandated that Iraq eliminate its offensive weapons, there are many hidden agendas in the Bush administration's offensive against Iraq. To be re-elected Bush obviously needs a major victory and symbolic triumph over terrorism and needs deflection from the failings of his regime both domestically and in the realm of foreign policy. Indeed, in the global arena, Bush appears to be the most hated U.S. president of modern times and anti-Americanism is on the rise throughout the world. Moreover, ideologues within the Bush Administration want to legitimate a policy of preemptive strikes and a successful attack on Iraq might normalize this policy. Some of the same militarist unilateralists in the Bush administration envisage U.S. world hegemony, George Bush's "New World Order," with the U.S. as the reigning military power and world's policeman. Increased control of the world's oil supplies is a tempting prize for the former oil executives who maintain key roles in the Bush Administration. And, finally, one might note the "Oedipus Tex" drama, where George W. Bush's desires to conclude his father's unfinished business and simultaneously defeat Evil to constitute himself as Good is driving him to war with the fervor of a religious Crusade.

Concluding Comments

Obviously, multifaceted global events like the projected war against Iraq are highly complex and have a wealth of underlying factors. Thus it would be a mistake to suggest that one single factor like control of oil or domestic political goals were the key factor in either the Gulf War and or the current Iraq crisis. Complex historical events are overdetermined and require multi-causal analysis (Kellner 1992).

Yet in a highly saturated media environment, successful political projects require carefully planned and executed media spectacles. What I have been arguing here is that both the September 11 terror attacks and George Bush's Gulf War were prime examples of such spectacles, and that George W. Bush's proposed war against Iraq could be read in this light. Thus, both al Qaeda terrorists and two Bush administrations have used media spectacle to promote their agendas.

In the U.S. and much of the Western world, the corporate media have followed the Bush administration in demonizing bin Laden and terrorism while celebrating U.S. policy and military interventions. A critical cultural studies, however, should dissect dominant discourses, images, and spectacles of all contending sides, denoting manipulation, propaganda, and questionable policies. I have suggested that multilateralism is the appropriate global response to problems like terrorism and regimes like Iraq, and that global institutions and not unilateralism U.S. military intervention should deal with such problems.

In conclusion, I would like to argue that in a world when ever fewer media corporations control the broadcasting and print media that the Internet provides the best source of alternative information, a wealth of opinion and debate, and a variety of sites that might possible political discussion and organization (Kellner 2002). Although there is a frightening amount of misinformation and reactionary discourse on the Internet, there is the potential to become literate and informed on a variety of important topics. Indeed, the Internet has played a key role in nurturing the anti-globalization and global justice movements, and is playing an important role in facilitating development of a global anti-war movement.

Even more, the global peace movement that is constituting itself as a counter-spectacle to Islamic terrorism and Bush militarism signals a democratic alternative to war. The spectacle of millions demonstrating against an attack on Iraq in 2003, activists going to Iraq to serve as human shields against U.S.

and British bombing, and the daily protests throughout everyday life present opposition to war and struggles for peace and democracy.

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Notes

¹This study draws upon my books *The Persian Gulf TV War* (Kellner 1992); *Grand Theft 2000* (Kellner 2001) *Media Spectacle* (Kellner 2003); and *From 9/11 to Terror War: Dangers of the Bush Legacy* (Kellner, forthcoming).

²I attended a three-part symposium telecast live in the Beverly Hills Museum of Radio and Television which included media executives and broadcasters throughout the world who described how they processed the events of September 11. Representatives from Canada, European countries, China, and elsewhere described how they got footage to broadcast, how the story dominated their respective media sources, and how the story was truly global in reach. An archive is collecting video and commentary on September 11 broadcasting throughout the world.

³In this section I am indebted to students of my UCLA Cultural Studies seminar and to Richard Kahn who developed a website where the class posted material relating to the September 11 events and Afghan war; the following study draws on this material that can be found at:
<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/ed270/index.html>.

⁴Shortly after this and other outbursts, the frothing Coulter was fired from *National Review* when she reacted violently to efforts to tone down her rhetoric by the editors, helping to provide her with martyr status for the U.S. Talibanites. Later, Coulter stated in a speech that American Taliban John Walker Lindh should be executed so that liberals and the left can get the message that they can be killed if they get out of line.

⁵ The Bush-Baker-Carlyle connection was documented in many English newspapers, the *New York Times*, and other sources, collected on <http://www.bushwatch.com> and Phil Agre's Red Rock Eater list collected at <http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/people/pagre/rre.html>. See also Melanie Warner, "The Big Guys Work for the Carlyle Group," *Fortune* (March 18, 2002).

Christine Kelly

How Dinesh Gets Over: The Unmeritous Scholarship of Dinesh D'Souza

by
Christine Kelly*

For about a decade now, Dinesh D'Souza has been vexing serious left and liberal intellectuals. D'Souza's meteoric rise—from Bombay-Rotary Club exchange student at the University of Arizona in 1978 to media-renowned political “expert” and Rishwain Scholar at Stanford University's conservative Hoover Institution today—might be cast as one of the great immigrant success stories of our times. That along the way D'Souza has, as he puts it, “harpooned” battalions of liberals and left Americans in the process, is his peculiar distinction. After all, it isn't everyday that liberal and left America should draw its most enthusiastic and anointed critic from the ranks of third-world university exchange students. Equally distinctive to D'Souza's profile is that he has remained immune to serious counter-attack. This is not to say that he has not been criticized, but only that the most energetic efforts to curb his increasing influence have been undertaken by student activists unhappy with student fees underwriting his campus appearances—a questionable tactic that often backfires. D'Souza's immunity from more serious challenge is in part the result of the choice made by noteworthy liberal and left intellectuals to ignore him based on two core assumptions: (1) no one could possibly take him or his work seriously; (2) serious engagement will only bring him more attention. But ignoring D'Souza has not diminished his influence. D'Souza's books continue to make best sellers' lists while his professional credibility only increases.

A second explanation for the fact that retaliation has largely passed D'Souza by might be that liberal and left intellectuals remain attached to a type of civility unrecognized by D'Souza. It is not typical of people holding academic positions—left, right or center—to commit to print the kind of no-holds-barred polemics for which D'Souza is best known. Without sinking all standards, it may be due time, then, to give Mr. D'Souza a little of his own medicine. Afterall, one who lives by the harpoon, might expect to see one coming now and then. And now in his latest two titles, D'Souza has provided

ample reason, both political and professional, for, as they say, taking off the gloves.

Easy Street

There is nothing typical about Dinesh D'Souza's ride to the top. His is an exceptional journey, but exceptional only in the sense of odd or irregular. He holds the post of "scholar" but has earned only a BA in English from Dartmouth where he eventually transferred. At age 26, he served as Senior Domestic Policy Analyst under Reagan without a shred of serious policy training. In fact D'Souza, the political "expert," has no training whatsoever in social science. Moreover, he has been appointed to two research institute positions without a single peer-reviewed essay or publication. And, perhaps not surprisingly, he is treated as a serious intellectual in the media and publishing world despite the remarkable lack of research that goes into his books.

As an immigrant "success" story, his is more reminiscent of the political patronage and smoke-filled backroom promotions of over a century ago—only this time ethnicity and tribalism are denounced and denied as the source of D'Souza's power. In reality, D'Souza has little in the way of credentials or training to merit any of his promotions.¹ In transparent violation of his own meritocratic-fanaticism, D'Souza's rewards are, in the end, a result of his willingness to fill the role of brown-skinned provocateur for the Right. The rest of his booty comes in the forms of both party-paybacks and the ironic glory bestowed upon him by a low-brow media (including a profit-anxious publishing industry) he bashes. Though race, ethnicity and identity are all liberal bogeymen for the Right, it is they who so skillfully play the "race" card. If Dinesh D'Souza were not East Indian, he would simply have no role to play for the Right: there would be no White House credentials, no appointments as "scholar," and no press. Nothing can testify to the truth of this perhaps disquieting charge more than the evidence of his own poor scholarship, philosophical inconsistency and his signature but shamelessly sophomoric panache. In the two titles he released in 2002—*What's So Great About America* (Regenery Press) and *Letters to a Young Conservative* (Basic Books)—D'Souza has really outdone himself. Indeed, the real story between these two books is the utter laziness and flouting of academic integrity their author displays.

A few things dawned on me while reading these two works in the space of two weeks. One was, what a much greater investment decision it would have been for the Right had they funded a proper graduate education for Dinesh rather than permitting him to hone his “writing” and oratory while on staff at the American Enterprise Institute and more recently at the Hoover Institution. With proper graduate school training in, for example, political science, D’Souza would have experienced three years of seminar reading, writing and evaluation; a year of preparation for and completion of rigorous qualifying examinations; another year of guided doctoral research; and finally, in another year’s time he might have produced a scholarly dissertation reviewed and approved by a committee of senior faculty.

Had any of this happened, Mr. D’Souza might have gone on to become a truly formidable foe. Certainly, he would have harnessed the scholarly standards he and other conservatives like Bill Bennett and Lynne Cheney hysterically defend. He might also have picked up some social science research skills in the meantime. And maybe, perhaps, a graduate school education would have softened the arrogance that characterizes so little effort in these pages. Among the many things a Ph.D. education can bestow upon someone is the humility of reason in the face of a political passion.

In the scholarly universe, it is not enough to be deeply committed; you must skillfully search for the most reasonable, most consistent and most demonstrable argument possible. Scholarly standards in the service of a political cause also keep one honest. Contrary to D’Souza’s cartoonish characterizations of left scholarship, it is the left that has historically cherished reason and the attendant standards of verifiability. Contrarily, the Right’s strategy, historically, has rested with appeals to faith and sentiment—most often in the form of nationalism, religious zeal, and patriotism. Assertion not argument, passion not reason, and symbolism not evidence have long been the building blocks of right wing ideology. In the absence of reasoned argument, patriotism and nationalism are more than wholesome passions; they are threats to the very Enlightenment ideals D’Souza tortures to fit his agenda. Perhaps this is because D’Souza doesn’t really understand the Enlightenment tradition’s cosmopolitan legacy? This explanation is preferable to the alternative which would suggest D’Souza knowingly engages in the capricious denial of the egalitarianism inherent in the tradition in order to protect his own unearned privilege and power? Regardless, in the course of these two titles he plays to fear, chauvinism and provincialism while advancing a set of dangerously unreasonable claims, which I will discuss

below. Equally unreasonable, moreover, is the “scholarship” D’Souza pastes together to defend god and country.

This brings me to the second thing that dawned on me while reading these two texts back to back: how they began to blend. At first I simply thought this was just the effect of D’Souza’s narrow and shallow range of topics (why multiculturalism and anti-racism are evil, why Reagan was great and why capitalism and the “West” are as good as it will ever get). But for anyone familiar with D’Souza’s methods of operations, the feeling of a rehash—be it a rewrite of a transcript from the lecture circuit or a TV appearance, or the re-positioning of a previous book’s argument—isn’t a surprise.² D’Souza has gotten the game of publishing down to a near science of efficiency. He has been a virtual pulp-machine the past five years in particular—after the lull between his first smash-hit *Illiberal Education* (1991) and *The End of Racism* (1995), he put out *Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader* (1997), *The Virtues of Prosperity* (2000), and now these two titles in one year.

But what at first seemed like a an eerie repetition in the current two texts, then turned out to be hundreds and hundreds of words in verbatim passages appearing without note in both books. Given that these books were put out by different publishers I began to think that Dinesh might not have imagined that anyone would actually read both books all the way through—including his editors.

That D’Souza’s editor at Basic Books, Liz McGuire, brought him to Basic from the conservative Free Press where she served as his previous editor might have contributed to the lack of oversight.³ While plagiarism of one’s own work is unlikely to produce a lawsuit, it is a violation of academic culture and, under normal circumstances, contractual standards. Though I can only speculate based on the evidence presented by these two texts, I venture to guess that if some eager researcher were to scan all of D’Souza’s books, and perform google string search across them in chronological order, the type of verbatim repetition without notation seen here might be traced back even further.

Whether there is a high crime here or not, it is evidence of the sloppiness and laziness characteristic of D’Souza work generally. That a “scholar” like D’Souza, whose arguments in both *What’s So Great About America* and *Letters to a Young Conservative* celebrate standards, merit and virtue, should

provide such a poor example should bother, at the very least, the Hoover Institution. As a trade author who has pulled down \$250,000 in advance money for a single book, it is also clear that the standards of the marketplace are less than meritorious. It is a lovely example of how the twin souls of modern conservatism—moral virtue and market principles— simply do not abide in the same house.

What's So Great About America?: The Empire Strikes First

In this post-September 11th defense of U.S. policy, culture and might, D'Souza begins with a preface in which he likens the U.S. role in the "War on Terrorism" to that of the Athenians facing Sparta. In long excerpts from Pericles' funeral oration, D'Souza dramatizes the conflict today as one of clashing moral orders: one premised on freedom and the other on militarism. Like Athens, America is "...a unique civilization that holds itself up as a universal model for civilized people everywhere." (p. xii) Despite the obvious incongruity of the analogy in military terms, D'Souza's mission in this book is to convince readers that America today offers the "best life" possible and that America deserves absolute defense by its citizens, including the willingness to give their lives in the fight against its enemies. That the terrorists of 9/11 were willing to make this sacrifice for their "side," D'Souza suggests, is not in itself "...contemptible or ridiculous; indeed it raises the question of what we in America would be willing to give our lives for. No serious patriotism is possible that does not attempt to answer that question." (p. 7)

Though the initial question is fair, the suggestion that its answer requires a renewal of patriotism—or love of fatherland above all—is an entirely different proposition. Despite his promise to deliver a "reflective" (*sic*), "...thoughtful and affirming patriotism" based on "first principles" (p.30) we end up instead with attacks on procedural liberalism and freedom of expression, and a unconditional privileging of what D'Souza argues is the Constitution's foundation in property rights.⁴ Equally defining for D'Souza are the prerogatives of might that unfettered accumulation delivers to whichever party garners the greatest wealth. In this sense, D'Souza's assertions are in keeping with the current assertion of American unilateralism based on naked power.

Despite the urgent need for a new politics of multilateralism in an era of globalization and international terrorism, the world watches the American Right—most notably from within the Bush Administration—vigorously assert the prerogatives of might in a demonstration of unilateralism grounded in nationalism and militarism. The Administration’s obsession with a “pre-emptive” U.S. war on Iraq dramatically illustrates the shift. As Philip Golub of the Institute of European Studies, in Paris has observed:

The “operational response to 9/11 has been accompanied by systematic unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy, that is the single minded pursuit of narrowly defined American national interests, and a complete disregard for the concerns and interests of other members of the international community, including the U.S.’s historic allies in Europe. ...In effect, the U.S. has abandoned multilateralism and law, that is institutionalized cooperation, or “soft” forms of global governance, in favor of purely coercive methods of management of the world system.⁵

This shift in foreign policy under the Bush Administration has its domestic policy and ideological counterparts as well—such as the infamous Patriot Act of 2002 with its extraordinarily broadened state surveillance powers. And now D’Souza does his best in this work to construct a new definition of American patriotism suited for the era. But just as the new Bush doctrine of American unilateralism ultimately rests on the use of force in the face of international law, D’Souza’s claim for American moral and cultural superiority is only possible by way of willful, ad hoc assertion in the face of established standards of reason. Little in these five chapters can possibly fit together in any reasonable philosophical frame. Indeed, D’Souza’s “talents” as a polemicist have always dominated anything like a theoretically cogent argument. This is not D’Souza’s problem alone but the problem of American conservatism generally with its two internal and contradictory impulses—one of attachments to religion, the traditional family and virtue; and one of attachments to the market, individualism and antistatism.⁶

Accordingly, there are the constant praises for capitalism as a system of merit and progress; but there are also the episodic and histrionic indictments of the widespread decline in America of respect for external moral authority, i.e., God. D’Souza’s Herculean task in this book is to simultaneously hold the U.S. up as a model while diagnosing serious moral decline. More challenging

will be his task of distracting readers from the spectacle of corporate dominance that marks our era and of finding a convincing “other” to blame the moral decline on; after all, corporate America doesn’t have an ethics problem, does it? How he meets this challenge is classic D’Souza.

America’s “moral” decline, by the way, is relevant to a discussion of global terrorism because, D’Souza reveals, the real Achilles’ heel of the otherwise impeccable “American way of life” is indeed its lack of moral virtue. This is what Al Qaeda insightfully identifies and so should the rest of us if we know what’s good for us. Of course, some groups in America are more responsible for this decline than others—below I discuss D’Souza scapegoating of African-Americans, liberals and the left generally. But how is D’Souza going to square his beloved capitalism with the loss of morality in American life? What follows in these pages is the magic of D’Souza’s *ipso facto*, ala-kazam philosophical reasoning. With the wave of the wand, D’Souza can make claims that range from the preposterous to outrageous. Examples include: Nietzsche is a liberal and Frantz Fanon is, literally, the Western intellectual behind bin Laden. And then there are claims like the Three-fifth’s Compromise was a favor to black Americans, and Jean-Jaques Rousseau—yes, Rousseau—is the real culprit behind the “torment and division” in contemporary American society.⁷ Such flamboyance characterizes the broader argument as well—and all of it is equally forced.

How the West Won: Ipso Facto, Ala Kazam

What is revealed almost immediately in this book is its hyper-national framework. In these chapters, D’Souza attempts to place the U.S. on such hallowed ground that its actions, domestically and internationally, are always justifiable—unless of course they are the result of liberal policies. The pedestal is provided by D’Souza’s inventive and incredible narrative in which all civilizational developments are credited to the US, and, tautologically, the U.S. is the most civilized nation on earth. It is a cartoonish world in which Europe, once past its colonizing period, simply does not exist and every developing nation is depicted as either hopelessly mired in barbarism or desperate to be like “us.” The only redeemable developing nations are those upon which European colonialism has left its indelible marks—like D’Souza’s own India of course.

It is actually creepy the way the terms “the West” and “America” are interchanged throughout the book. D’Souza’s privileging of America as the ultimate expression of the “Western tradition” serves as both claim and defense. But what characterizes this thing “the West” that D’Souza demands America represents and, therefore deserves our lives to defend? The “Western tradition” turns out to be valuable *not* because of the contribution of Enlightenment ideals *per se*, *nor* is it the political embodiment of those ideals in Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law. No, instead D’Souza casts the Western tradition in less expansive terms which, it should come as no surprise, look a lot like the principles of real politick—only with a dollop of a Christian God on the side.

D’Souza’s defense of the West/America begins with a new version of the history of civilization. It is a story in which he concedes that the West/America isn’t the only “one” to contribute to civilization, its just that America does civilization better than anyone else. D’Souza’s narrative on pages 42-45 pays a kind of lip service to what classicist Martin Bernal, in his two volume study *Black Athena*, has termed the Afro-Asiatic roots of Western culture (a work I’m betting D’Souza has not bothered to look at). Still, D’Souza’s strategy is to claim all credit for the “victors” of history and, it follows, enshrine that victory as moral. Despite their early developments, Asia, Africa and Latin America just didn’t have what it takes to become really civilized. He explains: “...civilizational development does not always go to the group that invents things. It frequently goes to the people who are able to take the inventions and run with them.” (p. 51) Indeed, it is Western *ingenuity*—and America as the highest expression of that can-do spirit—that ultimately packaged the “inventions” in the winning combination: science, democracy and capitalism. This recipe for civilization triumphs, D’Souza suggests, because science, democracy and capitalism each reflect a natural and universal human impulse—the desire to inquire, the desire to be heard and to the desire to barter (?). And what scholarly evidence for this set of naturalist claims does D’Souza offer? Of course, none. The only justification is yet again another tautological reference but this time he manages to fit God into the otherwise secular sounding formula: You see, the Judeo-Christian tradition is the only tradition to grasp the universality of these three natural impulses which *ipso facto* explains why wherever there was Christianity there too rose civilization.

In an effort to give some intellectual “credibility” to this very silly justification of American hegemony, D’Souza relies on Francis Fukuyama’s

Hegelian-like end of history thesis. While Hegel's philosophy of history was premised on a dialectical unfolding of "world spirit" which, he argued came to "rest" in the German constitutional state of 1828 it is a claim that admits teleological closure based on a metaphysic. In contrast, Fukuyama's end of history is justified only by the "last man standing" post-Cold War reality. More importantly, as with any philosophy of history, the horizon of possibilities—future invention, creative progress, and freedom itself—is eclipsed in the name of the status quo. While Hegel's philosophy of history denies freedom's future possibilities in philosophical terms, the damage it could have inflicted as public or state ideology was constrained by Germany's contestable military power. Whereas the German constitutional state of 1828 (and subsequent regimes) was militarily disposed, there were other nation-states who could and did contest any purported universality and future efforts to control the "world." But in our context, Fukuyama and D'Souza are rationalizing an empire which really has no match, no genuine military competitor and one which possesses every ability to impose its will—nuclear or otherwise—on the entire planet. End-of-history premises like theirs in today's context rationalize a whole host of chauvinist claims and iron-fisted forays abroad—and they threaten worse. Given this, D'Souza's simple minded conclusions are really more dangerous than silly:

In Fukuyama's view, history had ended, not in the sense that important things would cease to happen, but in the sense that the grand ideological conflicts of the past had been forever settled. Of course, the pace of liberalization would vary, but the outcome was inevitable. The destiny of Homo sapiens had been resolved. We are headed for what may be termed Planet America. (pp. 13-14)

Planet America? Lest we be put off by D'Souza's suggestion a few paragraphs later that confidence in the Planet America thesis has been shaken recently by the realization that there are "people, especially in the Muslim world that apparently hate our guts and want to wipe us off the face of the earth" (p.14) he assures us by page 175 that Planet America remains uncontested:

Moreover, given the things that people want, it is entirely reasonable to assert that some cultures (say, capitalist cultures with a Protestant heritage) are superior to other cultures (say, African socialist regimes or Islamic theocracies) in achieving these shared common objectives.

Just as D'Souza loads our choices here, his entire argument is loaded with the pre-ordained conclusion that the world is unable to achieve higher standards for human organization than those found in the American state. That conclusion ultimately permits the current U.S. regime to impose and defend its interests however and wherever it sees fit.

One Book for the Price of Two

D'Souza's self-serving and cock-eyed attempts at constructing a new patriotism are only part of the problem with this text. After the first chapter, the book lapses into old and really stale material. There are the all-too-familiar and vitriolic attacks on "multiculturalism" throughout. It is as if D'Souza, having scored big with the P.C. assault in 1991, just can't stop running the same play. This continued assault seems particularly gratuitous given the fact that the fictionalized multiculturalists he's been shadow boxing for ten years now, haven't even a shadow anymore. Since Reagan, the Right in America has been taking, holding and conquering new ground almost without pause. And it's not like the Democrats' move-to-the-right strategy hasn't helped them. Hasn't D'Souza noticed that all the actually-existing liberals are now, officially, demolished and in total disarray? Especially after the last two election rounds? As for the left, access to power has long been severed. Let's be honest here: the Right has the Presidency, both chambers of Congress, the high and most lower Courts, and is dominating in the international arena. In this sense, D'Souza reminds me of Senator Joe McCarthy. And like McCarthyism, the attack on multiculturalism was never an attack on the enemies of democracy, but an attack on democratic dissent. In that sense, even after the dissident elements have been marginalized, the chill—or confusion—requires renewal. I suppose that giving up the fight against the imaginary multiculturalists would mean giving up a whipping boy, and whipping boys are good insurance against the possibility of dissent in the future. The only other reasonable explanation is that D'Souza has no new cash-worthy ideas.

Once again, in *What's So Great* we are subjected to a full round of multicultural bashing. Whereas D'Souza has always had a bad habit of beginning his arguments with false propositions—usually in the form of hyperbolic characterizations of American liberals and the left (and black Americans in general) this time the multiculturalist argument is so stretched

and extreme that, hopefully, the excess itself will be enough to put this dead horse to rest. First, D’Souza repeats the same definition of multiculturalism which has been loaded from the start; he insists that the “multiculturalists” contend that “all cultures are equal” and therefore are guilty of cultural relativism. On both counts D’Souza has always been wrong. To the degree that “multiculturalism” is an actual paradigm, the notion of respect for the genuine contributions of other cultures has never amounted to a claim of cultural relativism. Second, D’Souza yet again claims that this non-existent movement of “cultural relativists” is the intellectual paradigm of choice among American liberals and the left—who also happen to dominate college faculties and public education. The idea that cultural relativism is the dominant intellectual paradigm in post-secondary, humanities and social science curriculum or that it is dominant in American primary and secondary public education is utter nonsense. It is a charge he has never mustered any actual evidence to support and therefore requires no detailed refutation. It is he who owns the burden of proof. The purported damage being caused by this fictional movement is, therefore, even harder to take seriously.

Still, D’Souza has managed to outdo his own past definitions of multicultural crimes. In this book, what was first identified as a threat to the freedom of expression of conservative college students on American campuses in the 1980’s, turns out now to be a domestic threat to American security likened to the threat of the militant Islamacists of September 11th. This smearing is accomplished by placing all critics of America in the same category. (The chapter in which most of the smearing occurs is titled “Why They Hate Us: America and its Enemies.”) This attempt to liken American intellectuals to Islamic terrorists is performed explicitly and by inference. For example, after quoting one critic of American military interventions abroad D’Souza quips: “Could bin Laden have put it better?” (p.26). More explicitly, D’Souza labels all critics of U.S. policy—whether reasoned or extreme—the “Blame America First” crowd:

The moral superiority of America is vehemently denied in three camps: among leftist intellectuals, especially in Europe and the Third World; among American multiculturalists; and among Islamic Fundamentalists (p. 169)

But who are the American multiculturalists that he tars with the bin Laden perspective? Among the many he targets in these pages are Howard Zinn, Barbara Ehrenreich, Noam Chomsky, and “literary critic [*sic*] Cornell

West”—all of whom are also charged with the high crime of “cultural relativism.” D’Souza’s effort here to tar some of America’s most well known left intellectuals with the terror of September 11th ranks among D’Souza lowest and most provocative slurs to date. To suggest affinities of any sort between these intellectuals and those who embraced the September 11th attacks on innocent U.S. civilians shows a total lack of scruples. And, as a matter of some significance, not one person on this list could ever conceivably be labeled a cultural relativist. D’Souza’s claim to the contrary is either simply idiotic or knowingly dishonest. This kind of unprincipled baiting might be tolerated in a college newspaper, like the Right-wing *Dartmouth Review* (where D’Souza picked up his political panache), but it is entirely beneath anyone with the title “scholar.”

And so goes the tone in the rest of *What’s So Great*. Old arguments and insults are dressed up for the post-September 11th climate. There is nothing new here except the opportunism D’Souza displays in hawking his old stuff in the midst of a crisis. To be fair, there is the new twist of taking up the “identity” of immigrant as credential to speak to the virtues of American life—a profound irony given his relentless denunciations of the politics of identity. But so much of the remaining chapters rehash D’Souza’s past three books: all the passages about the evils of multiculturalism (*Illiberal Education*), all the references in chapters three and six as to how technocapitalism produces “mass affluence” (*Virtues of Prosperity*), and the tirades against black families, black intellectuals, black SAT takers, black activists in combination with the obligatory attacks on Left intellectuals and activists (*Illiberal Education* and *The End of Racism*) are all here and just as overwrought as they were the first, second and third time around.

Indeed, African-Americans, for whom D’Souza has always reserved his most puerile and vindictive rhetoric, receive the same shameful treatment here they did in D’Souza’s *The End of Racism*. There, he argued that given the state of black culture in America today, private individuals are rational to discriminate. The law should permit such discrimination—in order to accomplish that D’Souza calls for the repeal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Other examples of D’Souza’s race-baiting commentary include his response to the idea that lower-income African-Americans could benefit from federal jobs and recruitment in the private sector:

...it seems unrealistic, bordering on the surreal, to imagine underclass blacks with their gold chains, limping walk,

obscene language and arsenal of weapons doing nine-to-five jobs at Procter and Gamble or the State Department.⁸

D'Souza's commentary on African-Americans can be so inflammatory and derogatory that it led black conservative Glenn Loury to resign from the American Enterprise Institute where D'Souza was on staff at the time.⁹ But instead of an admonishment, D'Souza's career took an upward turn when he was promoted to the far more prestigious Hoover Institution. Little wonder he repeats himself; it works.

The only remaining section of the book that actually seems "new" is D'Souza's "reading" of Rousseau in chapter five titled "When Virtue Loses All Her Loveliness." Though "new," I must say I almost felt embarrassed for D'Souza after reading it. D'Souza somehow manages to blame (credit?) the 1960s rebellions on Rousseau. With Marx seemingly out of the picture, it is obviously difficult for the Right to find a major thinker to revile—let alone one that can be linked to the imaginary domestic assaults on Western civilization currently be waged by the "mutliculturalists." But this is a stretch beyond stretches and one that D'Souza's painfully amateurish "interpretation" of Rousseau (and total ignorance about the actual movements of the 1960s) makes even more ridiculous. Here Rousseau is turned into a navel-gazing, new age hippie, concerned not with virtue, law, community and limits but its opposite—atomistic, self-referential authenticity. Though he grounds this claim in a discussion of Rousseau's *Confessions*, he does so in total disregard of those works which in fact were politically influential: *The Discourses* and, most importantly, *The Social Contract*. But even still, the idea that the mass movements for civil rights, peace and women's rights were actually influenced by Rousseau and that this influence is evident in the decline in American culture of obedience to external moral authority is, to the say the very least, inventive. D'Souza is weakest when he tries to act like an intellectual; his efforts here demonstrate pointedly that he should really stick with the street-corner polemics he is so good at—or please go to graduate school.

What is even more annoying is that I had to read this stuff twice since this is one of those many verbatim sections that *What's So Great* and *Letters to A Young Conservative* share in common. One of the more minor consequences of D'Souza own pilfering is that such moments make for a rather awkward transition between books.

Letters to a Young Conservative: Déjà Vu All Over Again

I AM FAR MORE comfortable with D'Souza in his role as a seasoned polemicist and right-wing prankster giving advice to undergraduates (after all, this is at least a more honest description) than in his grandiose role as scholar. At the same time, *Letters to a Young Conservative* reflects the same choplogic of a politico with little respect for the responsibilities of reasonableness that we find in his other work. The format for the book is a series of "personal" letters from D'Souza to a fictional but beleaguered campus conservative named "Chris". It is a fairly self-congratulatory set-up in which D'Souza gets to talk a lot about himself, his family, his friends, his great pranks, his promotions, and his courageous choice to become a writer and not go to Wharton business school (most of which we also get to hear about in *What's So Great*). But there is greater honesty and even less couching of his prejudices here than appears in his other titles. There are no scholarly pretensions—no footnotes, no studies cited, and no grand argument. One might even call it refreshing given the subterfuge of credibility D'Souza yearns for elsewhere. This is pure unadulterated polemics often delivered to the imaginary "Chris" in the form of "how to" advice. For example, D'Souza suggests that "Chris" develop a guerilla strategy just as he and pals did at Dartmouth in the 1980s:

Where to start? I don't know. Conduct a survey to find out how many professors in the religion department believe in God. Distribute a pamphlet titled "Feminist Thought" that is made up of blank pages. Establish a Society for Creative Homophobia. Prepare a freshmen course guide that lists your colleges's best, and worst professors. Publish Maya Angelou's poems alongside a bunch of meaningless doggerel and see whether anyone can tell the difference. Put a picture of death-row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal on your website and instruct people who think he deserves capital punishment to click a button and execute him online. (p. 36)

This is the real D'Souza who reminds us less of the wide-eyed Jesuit-trained school boy who arrived in America in 1978, and more like a southern posse-leader on his way to a round-up. Perhaps D'Souza's parents were right to have worried what America might do to their boy?

The book contains thirty-one letters whose titles include “Pig Wrestling at Dartmouth”, “Fighting Political Correctness”, “How Reagan Outsmarted the Liberals”, “How Affirmative Action Hurts Blacks”, “More Guns, Less Crime”, “How to Harpoon a Liberal”, “Against Gay Marriage” and “Why Liberals Hate America”. As you might guess, while more brash in tone, the fare is not new. It reads like a condensed version of D’Souza’s most provocative charges: why gay men shouldn’t marry? Because “marriage isn’t what civilizes men, women do.” On the quality of immigrants coming to America today? “Immigrants from Thailand are, in general, greater assets to America than immigrants from Tijuana.” On the self-esteem of black males? “...self-esteem in these students is generated by factors unrelated to studies, such as the ability to beat up other students or a high estimation of one’s sexual prowess.” On U.S. support for Somoza, Pinochet, Marcos and the Shah? “This support is fully justified when we consider the operating principle of American foreign policy...is the doctrine of the lesser evil.” Yes, Dinesh, that worked well with the Taliban, too.

The list goes on and the great temptation for critics is to try to refute his more outrageous and provocative comments; but in this book there are so many that one could spend many more pages than D’Souza has in fact written in an effort to set the record straight (after all, argument always takes longer than assertion). But I am not interested in debating D’Souza in an effort to show why he is manipulative and racist in his handling of the data on SAT outcomes by race, ethnicity and class; or how his reading of the Three-fifths Compromise (and much of what he says about the American founding is not only factually incorrect but excruciatingly twisted so as to justify the unjustifiable—slavery; or why his refusal to acknowledge corporate responsibility for widespread environmental damage is a cruel gift to his seven year old daughter; or why he should be embarrassed to put into print statements like “ordinary people from Asia, Africa and Latin America are conspicuously absent from demonstrations against globalization.” It is an endless and largely futile thing to argue with unreasonableness. Beyond unreasonable, D’Souza is a huckster. He is literally pedaling the same mean-spirited and academically-vacuous material for profit. over and over again. Just to give you an idea of the repetition and insulting arguments he traffics in, I present just two passages: the first from *Letters to a Young Conservative (LYC)* and the second from *What’s So Great About America (WSG)*. The topic here is the Three-fifths Compromise. If you are interested in a few more

choice examples of D'Souza's self-plagiarism, please see the appendix. But for now, behold and wonder:

(from *LYC*, p. 146)

—on the question of whether the Constitution of 1789 was racist:

But the charge is totally false. The notorious three-fifths clause of the Constitution makes no denial of the equal worth of African-American. Indeed, it has nothing to say about the intrinsic worth of any group. The clause arose in the context of a debate between the northern states and the southern states over the issue of political representation.

The pro-slavery South wanted to count blacks as whole persons to increase its political power. The North wanted blacks to count as nothing, not for purposes of rejecting their humanity but to preserve and strengthen the anti-slavery majority in Congress. It was a northerner, James Wilson of Pennsylvania who proposed the three-fifths compromise.

The effect of the compromise was to limit the South's political representation and thus its ability to protect slavery. Frederick Douglass, the black abolitionist, understood this. He praised the Three-fifths clause as a "down right disability laid upon the slave holding states" that deprived them of "two-fifths of their natural basis of representation." So the notion that the three-fifths clause demonstrates the racism of the American Constitution is both wrong and unfair.

(from *WSG*, pp. 109-110)

Are the founders guilty as alleged? Let us consider the evidence fairly beginning with the notorious Three-fifths clause to which [John Hope] Franklin alludes. To the modern mind, this is one of the most troubling pieces of evidence against the founders. And yet it should not be, because the clause itself has nothing to say about the intrinsic worth of blacks.

The origins of the clause are to be found in the debate between the northern states and the southern states over the issue of political representation. The South wanted to count blacks as a whole person, in order to increase their political power. The North wanted blacks to count for nothing—not for the purpose of rejecting their humanity but in order to preserve and strengthen the anti-slavery majority in Congress. It was not a pro-slavery southerner, but an anti-slavery northerner James Wilson of Pennsylvania who proposed the three-fifths compromise. The effect was to limit the South's political representation and

its ability to protect the institution of slavery Frederick Douglass understood this: he called the three-fifths “a downright disability laid upon the slave-holding states” which deprived them of “two-fifths of their natural basis of representation.” So a provision in the Constitution that was antislavery and pro-black in intent as well as effect is today cited to prove that the American founders championed the cause of racist oppression.

To conclude, D’Souza’s latest two titles testify to his salesmanship, not scholarship. His ability to produce at the rate he has is a result of his knack for selling the same couple of manuscripts over and over again, in varying combinations. And the products he hawks have been successful in America not because America is a meritocratic nation, but because D’Souza has been anointed an intellectual by a commercial culture interested only in what sells. D’Souza’s media success is related to his shock-value which now dominates the pop-culture industries’ sensibilities. D’Souza’s mean-spiritedness and chauvinism happen to now enjoy a political context backed by a party-of-the-same which controls all levers of institutional power. If D’Souza’s caricature of the “U.S. as moral and cultural superior” was hard to square before, his own slacking in these two books further discredits the claim. One can only wonder why the Hoover Institution keeps him on.

Appendix

Besides their obvious deficiencies as credible arguments, each of the passages excerpted below also serve to demonstrate D’Souza’s re-sale of a previous product. Following each passage, you will discover the related passage as it appeared in *What’s So Great (WSG)*. Each will give you a taste of D’Souza’s standards for scholarship; my intention here being only to let D’Souza’s work speak for itself.

—On Feminism:

(from *LYC*, p. 104)

Then something happened that pushed women into the male sphere and career women aspired to compete effectively with men for the most lucrative rewards of the male sphere. According to feminists, the large-scale movement of women

into the workforce was the consequence of the great about this: only a few decades ago, housework was a full time occupation—cooking and cleaning took up virtually the whole day. The vacuum cleaner and other domestic appliances changed all that. Until recently, work outside the home was harsh and physically demanding. Forklifts and other machines have reduced the need for human muscle. Finally, before the invention of the pill, women could not effectively control their reproduction, and therefore, for most women, the question of having a full-time career simply did not arise. feminist revolution that stormed the barricades of the patriarchy and won a glorious victory, although the battle is ongoing. This is a lovely fairy tale, but when exactly did the battle occur?...

Let us put this buncombe aside and talk a little sense. Technology not feminism paved the way for mass female entry into the workforce. The vacuum cleaner, the forklift and the birth-control pill had far more to do with this than all the writings of Betty Friedan and all the press releases put out by the National Organization for Women. Think about this: until a few decades ago housework was a full time occupation. Cooking alone took several hours. The vacuum, the microwave over and the dishwasher changed that. Until recently work outside the home was harsh and physically demanding. Forklifts and other machines have reduced the need for human muscle. Finally, before the invention of the pill, women could not effectively control their reproduction and therefore, for most women, the question of not having a full-time career simply did not arise.

(from WSG, p. 138)

Technology has also helped to change women's roles and thus destabilize traditional "family values". Here the great catalyst of social transformation was the mass movement of women into the workplace. Feminists fought for women's right to have careers, but their success was made possible by the pill, the vacuum cleaner, and the forklift. Think about this: only a few decades ago, housework was a full time occupation—cooking and cleaning took up virtually the whole day. The vacuum cleaner and other domestic appliances changed all that. Until recently, work outside the home was harsh and physically demanding. Forklifts and other machines have reduced the need for human muscle. Finally, before the invention of the pill, women could not effectively control their reproduction, and therefore, for most women, the question of having a full-time career simply did not arise.

—On Rousseau:

(from *LYC*, p. 4)

The second liberal revolution in occurred in the 1960's. Its watchword was liberation and its greatest prophet was Jean Jacques Rousseau. Before the 1960's most Americans believed in a universal moral order that is external to us, that makes demands on us. Our obligation was to conform to that moral order. Earlier generations right up to the: "greatest generation" of World War II took for granted this moral order and its commandments: work hard and try to better yourself, be faithful to your spouse, go when your country calls and so on.

But beginning in the sixties, several factions—the antiwar movement, the feminist movement, and the gay activist movement, and so on—attacked that moral consensus as narrow and oppressive. They fought for a new ethic that would be based not on external authority but on sovereignty of the inner self. This is the novel idea that received its most powerful expression in Rousseau's writing. To the American list of freedoms, Rousseau added a new one: inner freedom or moral freedom. Rousseau argues that we make major decisions by digging deep within ourselves and listening to the voice of nature. This is the idea of being "true to yourself." It is the new liberal morality.

(from *WSG*, PP 140 & 145)

The 1960's & 1970's witnessed a moral revolution in the United States in which the idea of freedom was extended beyond anything the American founders envisioned. The change can be described in this way. The American founders set up a regime dedicated to three types of freedom—economic freedom, political freedom and freedom of speech and religion—so that people could pursue happiness, or what we call the American dream.

But this notion of freedom was radicalized in the 1960's. The change was brought about by the "counter-culture", the melange of anti-war activists, feminists, sexual revolutionaries, freedom riders, hippies, druggies, nudists and vegetarians. Rebels they all were and bohemians of one sort or another. The great thinker who stood behind them, the philosopher of bohemia was Rousseau... The counter-culture did not reject morality; it was passionately concerned with morality. But it substituted Rousseau's conception of the inner compass for the old rules of obligation. Getting in touch with one's own feelings and being true to

oneself were now more important than conforming to the preexisting moral consensus of society.

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Notes

¹ D'Souza "political" career began under the tutelage of English professor Jeffrey Hart of Dartmouth College who happened to be a senior editor at the National Review. It was Hart's contacts, which landed D'Souza a post at the Review following his graduation. After a short stint there, D'Souza went into the Reagan White House for two years, then onto the American Enterprise Institute from 1989 until his recent post in 2001 at Hoover Institution of Stanford University.

² Of course, something like a re-hash can be tolerated under academic standards. Frequently the seminar paper turns into a dissertation chapter, and then is re-framed again as a journal article, which might yet again appear in a final version as a chapter in a full-length manuscript. But when published material is republished verbatim, standards require a note of previous publication.

³ Liz McGuire and D'Souza publicist at Basic, Johanna Pinsker declined comment when contacted except only to indicate they were not aware of previously published material in the text.

⁴ D'Souza makes the broad claim: that "[t]he American system is founded on property rights and trade, and *The Federalist* tells us that the protection of the unequal faculties of obtaining property is 'the first object of government'." (p. 90)

⁵ For Golub's complete analysis see "From Neo-Wilsonian to Militarism: Shifting Patterns of U.S. Governance" Cited here from unpublished English translation. Publication in French forthcoming in *Global Dialogue, (Paris) March 2003*.

⁶ For a concise and clear discussion of the conservative tradition and its challenges in the American context see Stephen Eric Bronner's "The Conservative Disposition: Custom, Stability, Markets" in *Ideas in Action*:

Political Tradition in the Twentieth Century (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

⁷ For a more detailed discussion on this embarrassing reading of Rousseau, see the section below, “Two Books for the Price of One.”

⁸ Quoted in Michael Berube, “Extreme Prejudice”, *Transition*, v.0, Issue 69, 1996, (p.93).

⁹ In particular, Loury condemned the phrasing D’Souza chose to dramatize white reaction to black’s IQ scores: “We can almost hear the roar of white supremacists. Forget about racism and discrimination. These people are naturally stupid.” (PBS Transcript , THINK TANK)

Eduardo Mendieta

Communicative Freedom and Genetic Engineering*

by
Eduardo Mendieta

[The humanization of nature] . . . is to be understood in three ways. First, the human being humanizes nature; that is, he transforms it into what is self-serving for himself and thereby creates, in an interknitting of the transformation of nature and the development of the human personality which requires more exact clarification, the cultural shaping of his nature. Second, the human being humanizes nature within himself in the course of the long civilizing process that has been engaged in by the human species. Lastly, the human being himself is a humanization of nature, being an upstart out of the animal kingdom; in the human being nature becomes humane.

Axel Honneth and Hans Joas¹

The biotechnological revolution unleashed by both the prodigious advances in information systems and the convergence of science and technology over the last century, thus giving rise to what is now called “technoscience,” has raised a series of questions that pertain to our most fundamental beliefs about human nature. These questions have in turn cast doubt on the nature of political modernity. The biotech revolution has allowed us directly to intervene in the processes of the production of biomass and bioplasm. While most of humanity’s phylogenetic history has been lived as toilers of the land, growers of crops, always entailing an industry of breeding, cross-breeding, selecting, nurturing and preserving plant and animal diversity, it is only in the last century that what was haphazard and always at the mercy of the inclemencies of the chaotic patterns of weather could be industrialized. This industrialization of agriculture in the second half of the twentieth century was called the green revolution. This revolution, so pronounced the agro-business of the industrialized nations, would spell the end of famine and the beginning of an age of crop superabundance. No children would go hungry in the age of industrialized agriculture. In tandem, although not visibly related, the same century saw the trans-national use of medicine to eradicate pestilence, plagues, and epidemics. We forget that the last century’s human cruelty was matched by the blind and devastating fury

of microbes and viruses, some of which were only eradicate by trans-national efforts (small pox, influenza, malaria, cholera, etc.). Societies became populations to be carefully tended to and monitored by the biopower of the health state; the state became the general doctor of society. Medicine became socialized, normalized, politicized, and highly scienticized, precisely because its benefits had to be maximized and its costs minimized. Both medicine and agriculture, and in concomitantly animal husbandry, have undergone unprecedented processes of scienticization and industrialization (i.e., techno-science) with the introduction of “bio-informatics.”

What bio-informatics allows us to do is to take to a higher level the industrialization of agriculture and the socialization of medicine: both have been turned over to a new conceptual paradigm and a new technological regime. Life is information, and this information itself is manipulable, spliceable, re-writeable, translatable, and, in the end, commodifiable. The biotech revolution entails the informatization of life, and the commodification of all information, and thus the commodification of all forms of life. Life is information, information is a commodity, a commodity is an object of exchange, defined by exchange value; life, then, becomes defined by an exchange value, no less nor more important than any other type of information that might be produced and accumulated by the bio-tech trans-nationals that oversee the production of life in the age of biotechnology.

This brief characterization of the biotech revolution allows us to get an idea of the kind of questions it has raised about our human essence: as living beings are we equally reducible to information as any other form of bioplasm in the biosphere? Can we dispossess our genetic information as we dispossess our information profiles that our “smart” MasterCard and Visas carry embedded in their microchips and magnetic strips? Should we not seek to remove crippling congenital diseases? Should we not make publicly available genetic screening kits that allow us to make more informed decisions about what kind of children we would like to give birth to? And, if we can allow, and in fact urge, the generalized use of genetic screening tests and devices (just as we allow pregnancy tests and morning after pills over the counter), why should we not also allow genetic enhancing techniques that seek not only to remove the dysgenic but also actually select the eugenic? Can we really discern the boundary between negative and positive eugenics in other than purely cultural conventions that recognize the arbitrariness of the decision not to excise from one’s genotype certain characteristics and potentialities? These questions, until very recently only countenanced in the

realm of the purely speculative and the sole commerce of science fiction, already give an indication how questions about “our human nature,” presage questions about our political modernity. If our human nature is so malleable, so disposable to our unalloyed will, is human dignity then an anachronistic notion? And if there is no human dignity, on what grounds can we advocate the respect and preservation of human rights? If political modernity is the marriage of freedom and reason, in which they are in a perennial dialectical tension, but in which the freedom of individuals is at the mercy of instrumental goals of creators and engineers, and reason is held hostage to a technological might, then is not this very political modernity in jeopardy? In making ourselves our own creations, are we not also endangering our most important project: the project of political modernity, in which the freedom of the many is balanced with the freedom of the individual, in which negative and positive freedom are precariously balance in a political freedom obtained through democratic self-legislation?²

It is this group of questions about the fate of our nature and the project of political modernity that are the heart of Jürgen Habermas’s recent book: *The Future of Human Nature: On the Way to a Liberal Eugenics?* This book, published toward the end of 2001, shortly after Habermas had received the Peace Prize of the German Association of Booksellers, is made up of two texts. The first one is a short lecture that Habermas gave on the occasion of receiving the Dr. Margrit-Egnér Prize given to him by the University of Zurich in 2000. The second text, which makes up three-quarters of the book, is based on the re-worked Christian–Wolff Lecture that Habermas gave on the 28th of June 2001, at the University of Marburg. The first lecture carries the telling title of “*Begründete Enthaltensamkeit: Gibt es postmetaphysische Antworten auf die Frage nach dem ‘richtigen Leben?’*” which may be translated as “Justified Abstinence: Are there Postmetaphysical Answers to the Question What Is the ‘Correct Life?’” The second text is titled “On the Way to a Liberal Eugenics? The Debate Concerning the Ethical Self-Understanding of the Species.” I linger over the titles of the chapters, because they already tell us much about Habermas’s argumentative goals: on the one hand, to argue for a self-limitation, or abstinence, in the face of the possibilities opened up by genomics and genetic engineering, notwithstanding the inability to provide postmetaphysical answers to the question about “what is the correct, or right, way of life?” On the other hand, Habermas wants to develop arguments that reject an already operative and taken-for-granted form of liberal eugenics that is based on the primacy of negative rights, which furthermore and most importantly threatens to undermine the very nature of

political modernity because it unwittingly leads to an alteration of the ethical self-understanding of the species.

These are two argumentative fronts that are related to two general principles in Habermas's discourse: ethics and his notion of deliberative democracy—that modern postconventional moral theories must be, and can only be, oriented by a deontological and cognitivist construal of moral norms, and that political rights admit, and require, rational justification, which is matched by, albeit not equivalent to, moral norms—i.e., both moral norms and political rights have a normative dimension grounded in the societal differentiation of value spheres (the aesthetic, the scientific, the political, and the moral).

In this essay, however, instead of seeking to reconstruct all of Habermas's arguments, and whether they withstand scrutiny, I will attempt to recover the conceptual core of Habermas's intuitions. I take it that many of Habermas's arguments in this book will shock both sympathetic and contrarian critics of his philosophical stance. They will shock his sympathetic critics because Habermas seems to be retreating from his hitherto unflinching defense of a deontological approach to moral questions, and they will shock contrarian critics because Habermas seems to be acquiescing to pressures to acknowledge the corporeality of ethical agents and to the entwining of questions of the good life with questions of the just life. I am less interested here in determining the extent of Habermas's retreat from his deontological views, and his ceding to quasi-Aristotelian and neo-Hegelian perspectives on questions of ethics and morality. I would like to reconstruct, and perhaps rescue, Habermas's intuitions in terms of seven main arguments, or steps. In a final section, I will use Habermas contra Habermas to develop a different, although not inimical, line of argumentation with respect to PGD and genomics.

I

Habermas's text is extremely rich, and filled with suggestive digressions. For this reason I would like to focus on seven arguments which I will proceed to list in a way that does not necessarily follow the order of presentation in the printed text, but which I think captures the logic of argumentation. *First,*

pre-implantation genetic diagnostics (PGD), and any form of genetic engineering, undermines, nay it is a direct affront to, our notions of bodily integrity. Both PGD and genetic engineering transform what is given to us by nature, into what is manufactured by us, or what we grant to ourselves in terms of a technology. In this way, our bodily integrity is undercut; for our bodies, which were given to us by the lottery of nature, become something we grant to ourselves in terms of production.

Second, both PGD and genetic engineering contribute to the collapse of the distinction between *having a body* and *being a body*, and in this way, our relationship to personal identity, and thus to moral identity and autonomy, has been undermined. To be a body is not the same as having a body, and it is precisely their non-convergence that allows us to accomplish our personal identities. We are our bodies, but they do not exhaust us, since we are always more than our bodies. Genetic manipulations fuse being a body and having a body, for the body that we have is the body that we give ourselves: intention and product became one.

Third, in so far as both our bodily integrity, and our personal identities are undermined, so is our freedom. Freedom is grounded in not just symbolic, or reciprocal, recognition by others, but also by the preservation and recognition of our bodily integrity. Freedom of the person is freedom of their corporeality, i.e., freedom is a dual recognition, namely of the person as a communicative co-subject, but also as a bodily, corporeal being. Insofar, then, as both my bodily and personal identity are undermined, so is my freedom.

Fourth, my freedom is further undermined as my right to an open future is foreclosed by both PGD and genetic engineering; in other words, any kind of genetic manipulation is a foreclosing of an undetermined future due to the lottery of nature. If we can design human beings, then we, allegedly, are also determining their future, and in this way, their freedom to be what they would make of their life is undercut.

Fifth, insofar as the freedom of future human beings is in question because of our genetic manipulation and intervention, both their and our moral identity is in question: theirs, because they would not have a ground on which to construct their moral autonomy—for this would have been preempted by our closing of their future; and ours because we would have treated other human beings, even if only future ones, as means and not as ends, as objects and not

co-subjects. Future generations would have become slaves to our instrumental choices, and we would have become slaves of our technological might which has vitiated any kind of moral restraint or abstention. Genetic manipulations and interventions challenge the moral identity of contemporary humanity as well as that of future human beings.

Sixth, such a challenge to our present and future moral identities means that we are stepping over an intolerable moral vacuum because not even cynicism has a place in a world in which anything is possible precisely because it is within our power.

Seventh, and finally, insofar as we have failed to raise the kinds of moral questions that we have been discussing, and insofar as we have acquiesced to the *fait accompli* of technologically-driven social revolutions, we have failed to fulfill our responsibility to and for future generations, and in this way, we might have irreparably broken the continuity between generations that guarantees the preservation of civilizational accomplishments. Future generations will look back at us with disbelief and resentment. Future generations might begin to think themselves as a different species, not only because of what we might have done to them in terms of optimizing them to the point that they might no longer resemble us, but precisely of what we did to them that they themselves would not do to their moral counterparts.

In the face of these challenges, Habermas offers three counter-arguments. In the face of the gravity of the kinds of challenges that genetic intervention entails, a purely deontological and post-metaphysical standpoint does not suffice, for it is the very future of the human species that is at stake. In this case, we must ascend to an *ethics of the species* [*Gattungsethik*], in which we depart from the fundamentals of the human species, and not from the procedural standpoint of the adjudication of moral norms. In this case, it is a matter of the preservation of those conditions that render morality possible, namely bodily integrity and moral identity. An ethics of the species can guide us in the near moral vacuum opened up by the prospects of boundless genetic manipulation and optimization. Related to an ethics of the species is the ethical grounding of the moral point of view. That is, prior to a commitment to the abstract, universalistic, deontological justification of moral norms, we must opt for an ethical stance toward humanity. In other words, the standpoint of justice is posterior to an ethical standpoint that is oriented by substantive values, that is material values: namely corporeal integrity and moral identity. And thirdly, in the face of a possible collapse, or demise, of

the project of political modernity, a political act of self-determination must be taken that rejects all genetic manipulation. Such an act is not a mere political fiat, but an ethical self-affirmation in the form of a political act: political will at the service of ethical self-preservation. In this way, liberal eugenics is rejected in the name of political modernity. Grounded, or justified abstention and self-limitation are not a retreat behind modernity, but a very affirmation of the project of political modernity. And the debate about the ethical self-understanding of the species is not anti-modern speculation, but precisely a debate about the very prospects of freedom and reason in an age of unrivaled commodification of humanity.

II

NOW THAT I HAVE GIVEN a sympathetic reconstruction of Habermas's main arguments, I would like to assess whether they are defensible, even in terms of his own sources and presuppositions. PGD and genetic engineering are no more affronts to bodily integrity than are any other kind of medical interventions, such as pacemakers, synthetic organs, prostheses, the inoculations of vaccines, the introduction of fluoride in potable water, the close scrutiny of levels of vitamins, fats, proteins in foods, and the Surgeon General's prescription of certain minimal levels of nutrition. One may argue that these medical interventions do not modify our "bodily integrity" in the way that genetic engineering does, because they are not aimed at design, but merely "fixing," or healing. But are not following: diets, visiting the doctor regularly, receiving vaccines and getting operated to receive implants or to have tumors removed, forms of design?

Perhaps what is at issue is that we might be altering the germ-line, that is, the entire human genotype, in such ways that its acquired, or eliminated, traits can be passed on. But then, this is a different issue than a matter of whether bodily integrity has been affronted. The issue is whether we have a right to pass on and impose on our descendents traits we selected for ourselves but in which future generations were not taken into account. It is not clear that genetic engineering represents a qualitatively new order of engineering, one that puts in question the very foundations of human identity. There is indeed a higher level of risk because we may be introducing into or removing from the human genome traits whose presence or absence is not clear. In Hans Jonas's view, there are two elements of genetic engineering that make it different from other forms of engineering: that experiment is the act—for we

are experimenting with life—and, that the changes might have an irreversible character.³ These two characteristics, however, have less to do with the fact that is in engineering and more than it pertains to the biological; for anything having to do with organisms is *ipso facto* a modification of their being, and an irreversible act.⁴

On another level, we are talking about the bodily integrity of non-existing human beings, people who have not yet been born and who would grow up, and be socialized, in their engineered bodies. What is the relationship of these yet to be humans to their bodies, in contrast to our own relationship to our bodies? I can say that if someone came along and took one of my organs or limbs without my consent, my bodily integrity would have been shattered, even if I would still remain myself, although now in an altered sense. On the other hand, I have the right, of course, to “donate” one or many of my organs. In the former case, damage to my symbolic identity is devastating, because it is un-voluntary. In the latter case it is minimal or non-existent because it is self-willed. Is having been genetically engineered like having one’s organs stolen, or given extra-organs or super-organs? Yet, what if I had been born with a faulty kidney, or a very weak heart, or a misshapen limb? What would my relationship to my body have been? What is the difference between having one’s body altered before consciousness, before we acquire and build up a unique identity, and having it altered after acquiring that consciousness? Even if I had one of my limbs, even one of my senses (let us say vision) removed or damaged beyond repair after having acquired a certain identity, I could still re-constitute my personal identity to deal with the damage done to my bodily integrity. It is a unique characteristic of humans that their identities are not corporeal, but symbolic, and that this symbolic identity is negotiated, maintained, avowed or refused on almost a daily basis. Genetic engineering does not alter these metaphysical questions.

Here we have already touched the second point. PGD and genetic engineering no more contribute to the fusion of “being a body” and “having a body” than anything else we have done or can do to our selves as corporeal entities. Even genetically-engineered humans would have to assume responsibility for their existences, no matter how closely we may have engineered their bodies. Their freedom would never be impaired, even if their horizon of choices has been altered. So long as human life continues to be biological life, and so long as this biological life assumes the form of a metabolic organism, there will always exist the gap between being a body, and having a body. All organisms, where being organic means establishing a

metabolic self-sustenance, have a dual relationship to their material substance. As Hans Jonas puts it: they are “dependent on the availability of this substance, the organism is nonetheless independent of matter’s particular identity. Its own functional identity does not coincide with the substantial identity of its material components, which nevertheless constitute it completely at any given moment.”⁵ Only after the next evolutionary step has been taken, in which consciousness gets uncoupled from its biological substratum, will the abyss between *Leib* (being a body) and *Körper* (having a body) be bridged,⁶ and when this breakthrough takes place, the issue of genetic engineering will be moot, for we would have begun a new age in which the living would have become mechanical, and the mechanical would have become living (the cyborg, of which recent nanorobots are their primordial zoa).⁷

Human freedom will remain a mystery, or one of those perennial philosophical questions about which future philosophers will still be wondering. Only the most extreme form of genetic determinism can be a point of departure for thinking that the freedom of future humans will be impaired or constrained. But genetic determinism is ideology. There is no gene for human freedom. In fact, in light of Habermas’s own understanding of communicative freedom, freedom is something we are socialized into. Freedoms, both negative and positive, are social achievements, preserved and assured by institutions that relate to corporeal integrity, but are not reducible to it. The freedom of future genetically-engineered humans will be determined not by their genes, but by the kinds of political institutions we develop and which they inherit.

For similar reasons, we must reject the idea that genetic engineering entails a closing of the open future of genetically-modified humans. Human futurity—or “natality,” to use Hannah Arendt’s expression—is related to human freedom; in fact, human freedom is the ability to initiate, to begin anew, and to be a beginning for a new action. Action is the social counterpart of natality.⁸ Future generations would still have to assume charge of their existences, live out their freedoms, and engage in action. But, we might object, is knowing that one has been genetically engineered not a burden, knowing too much, in such a way that like Oedipus, we are led to bring about our own fate. Is not human freedom based on a basic ignorance about what is fated to us? But do we not all, regardless of whether we have been genetically enhanced or not, suffer under the burden of knowing both too much and too little? Only if we subscribe to an extreme form of determinism

can we accept that genetic modifications entail the closing of the open future of genetically engineered humans.⁹ Genetic engineering or not, the question whether action is determined, and our choices pre-established, will remain a perennial metaphysical problem.

The moral identity of future generations is not more in danger because of our genetic optimizations than it is because we are extinguishing biodiversity, irreparably transforming the biosphere, exhausting sources of potable water, and failing to make provisions for renewable resources for future generations, and most directly determining, because we failed to prevent genocide, and from closing the gap between the poor Third World and the wealthy “First World.” For the distance between future genetically-enhanced generations and us is less than that between the poor of the world and the average citizen of industrialized nations. Note, for instance, that the income differential between the fifth wealthiest and fifth poorest was 30 to 1 in 1980, 60 to 1 in 1990, and 74 to 1 in 1995. In just over forty years, this differential has more than doubled. Biotechnology, unsupplemented by genetic engineering, can only increase these disparities. The rupture in moral identity from generation to generation is inevitable, and in fact a necessary condition of the very moral formation of humanity. Every human being must negotiate from year to year, decade to decade, his moral portrait. Analogously, cultural life-worlds can only persevere to the extent to which they allow for the processes of cultural transmission to be submitted to the a dual processes of rejection and acceptance. The moral identity of future generations is something that they will negotiate in light of their own tasks, some of which they would have inherited from us and some of which they will impose on themselves.

Would our own moral identities have been severely damaged either because we had made a choice to pursue genetic engineering, or because we failed to even undertake public deliberation of its possible adverse consequences? Is humanity, as such, at any given moment, morally accountable for its identity? Is humanity, as such, at any given moment, capable of been ascribed a moral identity? Humanity is embodied in a heterogeneity of societies—societies that are formed by particular types of cultural life-worlds, which are, in turn, horizontally and vertically shot through with heterogeneity. At most, we may be able to speak of the morality of particular societies, and even then, this putative moral identity is not given *a priori*, but is a topic of deliberation. Habermas himself has argued this in the context of the *Historikerstreit*. And as he put it in his Sonning Prize acceptance speech, “Beyond guilt that can be ascribed to individuals, however, different contexts can mean different

historical burdens. With the life forms into which we were born and which have stamped our identity we take on very different sorts of historical liability (in Jasper's sense). For the way we continue the traditions in which we find ourselves is up to us."¹⁰

The moral burden for the possibly disastrous effects of genetic engineering cannot be foisted on humanity per se, but are liabilities that only certain contemporary societies have taken on. And even when these liabilities can be attributed only to particular societies, it is up to their citizens to evaluate and take up these moral burdens through a public debate. It is here where I see the strength of Habermas's public intervention concerning the possibly disastrous effects of PGD and genetic engineering, namely by urging us to engage in a broader, more deliberate discussion about the benefits and hazards of a seemingly qualitatively different form of engineering that may alter the very nature of humanity.

We have no less stepped over a moral abyss for thinking that we may be optimizing ourselves through genetic engineering than for having failed to do enough, or anything at all, for the growing disparity between the poor and the rich. One may argue, in fact, that while the former is actually a function of our moral scruples, the latter is a failure of our moral nerve. At the same time, no matter how much deliberation we bring to the question of genetic modification of the human genome, future generations will assuredly challenge our own moral self-presentation. And it is in this question that is always the prerogative of our contemporaries and future humans to challenge our moral self-presentations and portraits that sustain the vitality of cultural forms of life.

Finally, we cannot know in advance whether our acts of omission or commission with respect to genetic optimization of the human species will be a failure or fulfillment of our duty to future generations; for it is not clear yet that the benefits are greater or less than the hazards. To close paths for future biotechnological developments would certainly be a failure of our responsibility to future generations. To have abstained deliberately from allowing irreversible changes to take place is perhaps the minimal duty to allow our descendents to have the prerogative to repeal and recall such self-imposed limitation. As Eric Lander, director of the genome center at MIT's Whitehead Center, phrased it: "I would have a ban in place, an absolute ban in place on human germ-line gene therapy. Not because I think for sure we should never cross the threshold, but because I think that is such a fateful

threshold to cross that I'd like society to have to rebut the presumption someday, to have to repeal a ban when it thought it was time to ever try something like that."¹¹ This minimalist ethics of self-limiting abstention is the very least we can do for future generations. And neither a philosophical anthropology nor an ethics of the species are necessary to ground it.

III

THE TRANSITION TO A postmetaphysical paradigm in thinking, we can argue along with Habermas, was augured and brought about by intra-philosophical, and intra-intellectual, logics of transformation: from identity thinking to procedural reason; from the philosophy of consciousness to the linguistic turn; from the exorbitant claims of *theoria* to the deflationary rethinking of philosophy *qua* its redefinition as a helper of the social and natural sciences.¹² This very transition, however, must also be understood in terms of historical experiences: the discovery of the New World, the Reformation, and the concomitant confessional wars, and the discovery of historical cultures, and above all, the discovery of humanity as an object of study (ethnography and anthropology).¹³ A postmetaphysical orientation in thinking is not only a conceptual imperative, but also the product of world-historical experiences that have rendered all cultures equally close to the universal, and thus, equally distant from universalistic claims (in the way that Kant and Hegel once hoped to argue).¹⁴ I want for the moment to focus on two central lessons learned from this transition to a postmetaphysical orientation in thinking and the life world. The first one is the recognition of the need to respect cultural differences, and hence the need to move from a substantivist, i.e., metaphysical and ontological, to a proceduralist construal of reason.

Proceduralist reason does not prejudge whether a particular embodiment of reason is more or less rational than those from which we think or reason ourselves (again as Kant, Hegel, and even Marx presupposed). A postmetaphysical understanding of reason means that reason is understood in terms of norms of justification and adjudication, that is, practices of reason giving and testing. In as much as reason is procedural, it is also situated and embedded in historical contexts of praxis and tradition. One may argue then that procedural reason is post-Eurocentric or anti-ethnocentric, and in this way seeks a dialogue not just among the disciplines and sciences, but also among cultures and traditions. Procedural reason opens itself up to the

transcendental from within, and not from the *sub specie aeternitatis* standpoint of universal reason. The second lesson has to do with the launching of the project of political modernity, which by many accounts is still underway, and still in the process of being clarified. As was intimated early on, the project of political modernity has to do with the attempt to dialectically balance the claims of reason with the claims of freedom. Another way of saying this would be to claim that freedom must be legitimated through a process of rational deliberation, and that this deliberation is only possible if humans have been empowered by political liberties. Political power has authority because it is deliberated; it has been rationally enacted. And this power is at the service of the political liberties of citizens. In the name of freedom we can always contest power, and power requires that it be legitimated, lest it turn tyrannical, and thus a refutation of freedom: reason and freedom meet in a precarious balance.

An attempt to ground a political response to the challenges of PGD and genetic engineering on an ethical self-understanding of societies, and, furthermore, to attempt to justify a political act that rejects genetic engineering in the name of an ethics of the species are two argumentative moves that betray these two central lessons. On the one hand, to ground an ethical response to the challenges presented to us by genomics in terms of an ethics of the species, the acceptance of which is the precondition for the proceduralist and cognitivist postconventional morality that is the hallmark of modern societies, means that we have retreated behind the post-Eurocentric, or anti-ethnocentric aspect of postmetaphysical reason. The argument for the acceptance of an ethics of the species masks the imposition of a Western understanding of what is essential to be human. There is no need to rehash here the plurality of cultural perspectives on what makes humans distinctive, or non-distinctive, from other living species. It truly would be disastrous in an age of dialogical cosmopolitanism, or what Walter D. Mignolo has called “critical cosmopolitanism”¹⁵ to smuggle under the mantle of an ethical imperative an ethnocentric blackmail: either you are moral, by accepting our ethical values, and reject genetic engineering, or you are not, because you reject our ethical values, and thus you cannot know ascend to the moral, and thus are doubly written off from the moral register. Such ultimatums and threats to be blacklisted are redolent of the worst forms of Eurocentrism. In an age in which globalization movements from below, such as feminism, peace, anti-nuclear weapons, environmental and green movements, have emerged from a trans-national, post-nationalist, and trans-cultural syncretistic consciousness, such theoretical gestures create dissonance.

On the other hand, the response to the challenges posed by genomics cannot be properly met with ethical tools, but political tools. An ethical articulation of genomic challenges obfuscated their legal and political character. What is at stake is a balance between the communitarian rights of societies, and the negative rights of citizens. An ethical presentation of the issues involved in genomics threatens to conceal the dimensions related to the negative rights of citizens to determine their own “correct life.” It is these negative rights that Habermas glosses over when he invidiously convokes the name of a liberal eugenic followed by a question mark (as he does in the subtitle of his book). We may understand the Hippocratic Oath as a response to the judgment nature passed on us, and the death we unleash on each other. Life for the human being is not just a metabolic process. It is, above all, a social activity. If metaphysics is born with graves, as Jonas has written so beautifully, justice was born with the question of life: its preservation, sustenance, and growth. For the human being, life is a question of justice: the right to life, before it is a right to the “correct form of life” is a right to life itself. This right to life, is what is at the heart of the universal declaration of human rights.

The benefits granted by reproductive technologies and genomics were developed precisely to enhance this right to life. But, at the same time, we can neither say what the content of that life should be, nor can we dictate how that life should be led and lived. For this reason, the dominion over the living, and life, is a negative, non-prescriptive type of bio-power. So long as everyone’s right to life is ensured and protected, the way that life is lived, and the form that life takes, cannot be controlled, prescribed, or proscribed. And it is this self-constrained and abstemious biopower of political modernity that explains the simultaneous, and seemingly disparate tendencies in contemporary modern culture, namely the simultaneous acceptance of the culture of self-optimization with the culturalization of disability; i.e., just as we are understanding of peoples desire to want to prevent the transmittal of genetic mayhem, we also are equally understanding of the desire to nurture life not marked as diseased, but as challenged and requiring of our care and solicitude.¹⁶ A culture in which disability is seen as culture, and not solely as disease to be eradicated, is perhaps the epitome of what Habermas has so eloquently defended in most of his work: communicative freedom. In communicative freedom injurability (dependency) and integrity (autonomy) are synthesized into political autonomy.¹⁷ For this reason, justice is the other side of solidarity, as Habermas himself has argued: freedom and compassion, liberty and dependency are entwined in our political project of modernity.¹⁸

And it is this communicative freedom that an ethics of the species and a political self-affirmation of political modernity motivated by an ethical perspective put in jeopardy.

Notes

* Review of Jürgen Habermas, *Die Zukunft der menschlichen Natur. Auf dem Weg zur einer liberalen Eugenik?* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).

1 Axel Honneth and Hans Joas, *Social Action and Human Nature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 9-10.

2 For my reading of political modernity see Albrecht Wellmer, *Endgames: The Irreconcilable Nature of Modernity. Essays and Lectures* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1998), chapter 1: "Models of Freedom in the Modern World (1989)," pp. 3-38.

3 See Hans Jonas, "Biological Engineering—A Preview," in Hans Jonas, *Philosophical Essays: From Ancient Creed to Technological Man* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 141-167; for Jonas's contrast between general engineering and biological engineering, see pages 142-46.

4 Leon R. Kass, who was named director of the Council on Bioethics by U.S. President George W. Bush, argues that genetic engineering is qualitatively different from other forms of engineering because, first, it alters the germ-line; and second, it creates a new capacities and norms of health and fitness. The first concern, as I will argue, is perhaps the strongest aspect of this line of argumentation. The second concern is the weakest, for from generation to generation the capacities and norms of humans have changed. Prolonged life expectancy, fertility drugs, socialized healthcare, and new reproductive technologies are unhinging our expectations about when and what human can do. At the same time, new diseases have began to proliferate: breast cancer, heart disease, STDs, HIV, obesity and diabetes. See Leon R. Kass, "The Moral Meaning of Genetic Technology," in *Commentary*, September 1999, pp. 32-38.

5 Hans Jonas, "Evolution and Freedom: On the Continuity among Life-Forms," in Hans Jonas, *Mortality and Morality: A Search for the Good after Auschwitz* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996), pp. 59-74, quote on page 66.

6 Habermas relies on Helmut Plessner's distinction between *Leib* and *Körper*, and in general in his phenomenological philosophical anthropology. See the discussion of Plessner, and Habermas's debts to his, particularly in his pre-communicative turn works, in Axel Honneth and Hans Joas, *Social Action and Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

7 See Edith Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines* (New York: Viking, 1999). According to Kurzweil, this new evolutionary step will be taken by the year 2099, a mere 77 years from now; see page 280 in his cited book. This might sound overly optimistic, but then again, a mere 77 years ago we did not have computers, had not landed on the moon, nor had the notion that organic life could be understood in terms of chains of information.

⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959).

9 See the wonderful essay by P.S. Greenspan, "Free Will and the Genome Project," in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 22, issue 1 (Winter, 1993): 31-43. Greenspan, however, thinks that genetic engineering does present a challenge to our notion of freedom as self-control, virtue as an attainment, and consequently to the idea of moral character as an achievement: "What it [genetic engineering] may seem to threaten is the *value* we place on freedom as self-control, insofar as it makes out the exercise of self-control as indirect in the sense of being mediated by something other than the agent's thought processes and their natural behavioral consequences." (42) On the grounds of Greenspan's own discussion about free will, however, I fail to see how successful self-control does not remain a challenge, a hurdle, a leap of faith even for the most genetically-optimized beings.

10 Jürgen Habermas, "Historical Consciousness and Post-Traditional Identity: The Federal Republic's Orientation to the West," in Jürgen Habermas, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1989), pp. 249-267, quote on p. 251.

11 Eric Lander quoted in Ralph Brave, "Governing the Genome," *The Nation*, December 10, 2001, p. 3. Printed from <http://www.thenation.com>, on 12/12/01.

12 See Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1992), chapter 3, pages 28-53.

13 See J. H. Elliott, *Spain and its World 1500-1700* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), especially chapter III: "The Discovery of America and the Discovery of Man."

14 See Enrique Dussel, *Ética de la Liberación en la época de la globalización y la exclusión* (Madrid and Mexico: Trotta, 1998), especially the introduction.

15 Walter D. Mignolo, "The Many Faces of Cosmo-polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism" in *Public Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Fall 2000): 721-748.

16 See Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labour: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

17 As Habermas has written: "The person develops an inner life and achieves a stable identity only to the extent that he also externalizes himself in communicatively generated interpersonal relations and implicates himself in an ever denser and more differentiated network of reciprocal vulnerabilities, thereby rendering himself in need of protection. From this anthropological point of view, morality can be conceived as the protective institution that compensates for a constitutional precariousness implicit in the sociocultural form of life itself. Moral institutions tell us how we should behave toward one another to counteract the extreme vulnerability of the individual through protection and considerateness. Nobody can preserve his integrity by himself alone. The integrity of individual persons requires the stabilization of a network of symmetrical relations of recognition in which nonreplaceable individuals can secure their fragile identities in a *reciprocal* fashion only as a members of a community." See Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran P. Cronin (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1993), p. 109.

18 Jürgen Habermas, "Justice and Solidarity: On the Discussion Concerning 'Stage 6,'" in *The Philosophical Forum: A Quarterly*, Vol. XXI, Nos. 1-2 (Fall-Winter 1989-90): 32-52.

Larry Heinemann in Conversation With Kurt Jacobsen

Larry Heinemann is a stocky 5'10" with graying beard and twinkling eyes. He is a lifelong and steadfast Chicagoan (four generations in the same Northside neighborhood; five, he points out, if you count his son) who was drafted into the Army in 1966. During 1967-68 he served in the 25th Division in Vietnam where he saw extensive action in the tunnel land of Cu Chi, Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh, and the Black Virgin Mountain in the "Iron Triangle" region northwest of Saigon where, among other things, he drove Armored Personnel Carriers. After a brief stint as the surliest bus driver in Chicago in the summer of 1968 (see his mordant comments in Studs Terkel's *The Great Divide*), he collected a BA from Columbia College in Chicago in 1971 and taught afterward in the writing program there until the mid-1980s. His grueling Vietnam combat experience became the grist and grit for his first novel *Close Quarters*, published in 1977.

His second novel *Paco's Story*, which he described as plumbing "the everlasting reverberations of the aftermath of the war," follows a disconsolate Vietnam veteran wandering in a ghastly ghostly haze through an oblivious America. It won the Carl Sandberg Literary Award and the National Book Award in 1986. In 1992 he brought out a very funny but, shall we say, regionally specific novel with the utterly enviable title *Cooler By The Lake*, which was a loving lashing out at Chicago's foibles, fools and scoundrels. His short stories and articles have appeared in *Penthouse*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Tri-Quarterly*, and the *Vietnam Writers Association Journal of Arts and Letters*. He has conducted writing workshops at nearly a dozen universities, including Northwestern, University of Southern California and the University of California at Berkeley.

Without burdening the text with innumerable parenthetical breaks and other annoyances it is hard to convey the stream of wry humor he injected into the interview through intonations, squints, and actorly pacing in his unhurried story-telling style. A lot of laughter, rueful or raucous, erupted even during some very grim recollections. Our interview took place in his Chicago home early in December 2002, a few days before he was embarking for Vietnam, via Paris, on a Fulbright scholarship. This would be his fifth trip back to South

East Asia since the war. When I accompanied him, and several companions, to meet Daniel Ellsberg on a book tour stop in Chicago, Heinemann expressed gratitude to Ellsberg for bringing the lies underpinning the Vietnam War to the surface. "A great, brave thing you did, sir," Heinemann told him. He has just completed a book on travel by train and bicycle around Vietnam, as yet untitled.

* * *

Q: Let's start with your Chicago background. I gather that you didn't quite have a privileged upbringing like, say, Oliver Stone who left Yale for Vietnam.

Heinemann: My old man was a bus driver. My mother was a farm girl from Michigan. My mother's side of the family, oddly enough, is connected to Abraham Lincoln. I'm a sixth cousin. My grandfather resembled him. He had high sunken cheeks, a high squeaky voice which Lincoln apparently had, and those melancholy eyes staring off into space like you see in a lot of photographs. My father was born in Chicago and my mother came here in the 1930s and worked as a nanny for a doctor's family up in Winnetka. She met my Dad, got married in 1939 or 1940. I was born in 1944. Went to work when I was 12, caddying summers.

Q: Was your father in the military?

Heinemann: No. He had flat feet. My uncles were. They never talked about it.

Q: Did you grow up expecting to go to college?

Heinemann: No. Like a lot of other families of ordinary working stiffs who came up in the Depression and World War II, the expectation was you finish high school and get a job. Guys like Bruce Weigl and Tim O'Brien and I laugh and say we became writers because of the war, not in spite of it. But my mother was a great storyteller and my grandfather was a wonderful bullshit artist. So I expect I got it from them. I worked for a while after high school. Then I went to Kendall, a two-year junior college across the street from Northwestern. I had a vague ambition to go to San Francisco State and get into theater. In 1966 I ran out of money, dropped out, and was drafted like

that. Bingo. I was 22. I went overseas at 23 where everyone else was 18 and they called me the old man.

Q: How about other family members?

Heinemann: I have three brothers and I am the only one who finished college. Three of us were in the service, two in Vietnam. I was in the Army and my youngest brother was in the Marines. He and I were there at the same time in 1967. He got wounded and sent home and then went back for a second tour. When he came back the second time, he and I didn't speak a word for ten years.

Q: Was that because of different takes on the war?

Heinemann: Oh, yeah. Extremely different views of the war. Not to say, opposite.

Q: Did he have a "kill 'em all let God sort 'em out" attitude?

Heinemann: Yeah. That's what the Marine Corps does. He dropped out of high school and my mother signed him in. The first day of boot camp he volunteers for Vietnam. But you are brutalized in a way that's unconscionable. The first night of boot camp everybody is scared shitless. They've got these monsters in Yogi Bear hats who scream at everybody like they've never been screamed at in their lives. Drill sergeants stand over each guy and scream at him until he volunteers. If he doesn't, they take him out back and beat the shit out of him until he does. But the Marines do know how to dress. Give them that. James Jones called it a "pointless pride." All these guys have is a really flashy fucking uniform. On the other hand, some of my best friends are former Marines, and they'd give you the shirt off their backs.

Q: How does Army training compare?

Heinemann: Compared with the Marine Corps, Army Basic Training was a piece of cake. The one thing it was good for was the physical training. When I went in I weighed about 140 pounds. Skinny, rundown, and nervous was the phrase in my family. After basic I weighed about 160. Romping, stomping dynamite (laughs). I was in the best shape of my life. As an ordinary rifle

soldier if you're not in good shape, you are going to die. The work is just too hard.

Q: There were lots of stories circulating about these superbly conditioned soldiers being spat on by protesters, which seems kind of unlikely.

Heinemann: We all heard the stories of getting spit on, that mythology, when we were overseas. I can tell you that when I arrived home I was not in the mood. Some years ago I read from *Paco's Story* at the University of Wisconsin and it was the only time I ever lost my temper at a reading. This guy, a history professor and the faculty pill, I was later told, said if he had met me at the airport he would have spit on me. I came out from behind the podium. I was shaking with anger and I said, "Shooting someone with a rifle and spitting on them comes from the same place in the heart. Second, I had just come from a place where I didn't take any shit from anybody. You spit on me and you get your ass kicked within an inch of your fucking life." I am not going to be ashamed that I came through the war that in one piece. I'm not proud of what happened in Vietnam, either. How can an honest person be proud of such a thing? But I am not ashamed.

Q: I heard that from other veterans, but did that ever happen?

Heinemann: I've talked with a lot of veterans, and I never heard anybody say they got spit on. Let me back up. I came back in March of 1968, about a month and a half into the Tet offensive. Three weeks later Martin Luther King was murdered. On June 5 Bobby Kennedy was shot and died on the greasy hot kitchen floor in Los Angeles. I got a job on a Chicago city bus and drove through the Democratic Convention. Driving a bus—a horrible job for somebody in my frame of mind. It's one thing about being a soldier that people here didn't get. We said it flat out loud, "I don't fucking care." There were those days when you said, "Just fucking kill me. I'm tired of this." I can't think of another kind of work that is as soul deadening, as dispiriting. I remember coming back to the airport and just feeling exhausted. You've been working on three or four hours of sleep a night for a year. You feel as if you have been taken out of time. Saturday I was in the 90th Reepie Deeple in Saigon. Sunday we stayed overnight at Oakland army terminal. I just want to go home. Please do not fuck with me. It wasn't as if I had a chip on my shoulder, or an attitude. I didn't have any attitude at all. Or maybe it was

more like, "Are you ready to fucking die? Cause I don't care one way or the other." The next night I was home in my own room. I slept on the floor.

Q: Think you needed a period of adjustment?

Heinemann: Thinking back? God, yes. Back then? Get me the fuck out of here. I don't want a fucking parade. I have had it. They take your khakis and give you a brand new uniform so you smell like the box of mothballs it came in. I put it on that afternoon about one o'clock, wore it home. I mustered out a sergeant, and it was the one and only time I wore my stripes. I looked like a toy. Got home that night, took it off, balled it up, hauled it to the garbage, and threw it away. I don't want anything to do with this anymore. I am a private citizen, thank you very much.

Q: So you start at Columbia College in the spring of 1968.

Heinemann: We're sitting around that first night in writing class, talking about what we want to write about. I say I just got back from overseas and I want to write about that. And there was this kind of suck of breath that went through the room. There was this look on everybody's face, like "You're one of them?" My attitude was, Yeah. I am one of them and if anyone wants to talk about it we can step out onto the fire escape six stories up from Ohio street and talk about it out there.

Q: So how did they wind up treating you?

Heinemann: Actually there was a great deal of empathy. A serious understanding by me of what they were trying to do against the war and a serious understanding by them for who I was and what the war was really about. After the news of [the] My Lai massacre hit the streets, it was, Whoa. They asked, This happen a lot? And I said that the spirit of atrocity was in the very air. We were all working class kids. We were the first kids in our families to go to college. This was Columbia College in downtown Chicago. We found out we shared a great deal. They started out, "You should be against the war, Larry." And I was telling them, "Let me tell you why you should *really* be against the war."

If there was an antiwar attitude among the troops I was with it didn't get any more sophisticated than, "Fuck this. This is bullshit." When I came back from

overseas I was just furious, and probably more radicalized than anyone I was in school with. I was extraordinarily bitter and for a long time I thought I was the only one. I had this remarkable energy. This “thing” that just blew through me has got to make sense, has got to mean something. I got into writing because I had this story that will not go away. The thing that hooked me was the second week the teacher comes up to me—I didn’t know then that he’d been a medic in Korea—and says, “Larry, if you want to write war stories read these.” He hands me the *Iliad* and *War and Peace*. Everything that should be in a war story is in the *Iliad*. And *War and Peace* is just a great yarn and a beautiful piece of work. Plus we were reading *Moby Dick* and *The Painted Bird*.

Q: It appears now that *The Painted Bird* was a figment of Jerzy Kosinski’s imagination.

Heinemann: I don’t care if it’s phony, what a great fucking story. Turned out Kosinski was pretty strange. So I came into writing telling war stories. Never to my face did anyone say anything about being a soldier. The closest anyone - came was to say how dare you tell those stories, how dare you use that language, and how dare you represent that point of view. That’s when I knew I was on to something. I mean, I wanted to take the war and just shove it up your ass.

Q: Who were these prissy people anyway?

Heinemann: I’ve run into people like that since, writers and writers who teach, and they act as if there is just one kind of story. They are doing the craft of writing, and teaching, an extraordinary disservice. How dare you tell any young writer that they may not write about something because of subject matter, or language or point of view just because you can’t deal with it? That’s your problem. Go find another line of work. The worst kind of teachers think stories happen from the neck up, that there’s a polite intellectual’s armchair distance. But if a story doesn’t make your skin crawl or make your bowels ache or your eyes fill with tears—well, what’s the point? Goody goody talk never gets anybody anywhere. The way I learned anything was always the hard way. I opposed the war because I was up to here in it. I learned what love really means when I had kids.

Q: What did you want to say?

Heinemann: I always tried to talk about the war in terms of the work. It seemed like a good place to start. What struck me about *Moby Dick* was that Melville talked about what the work was so that you get an honest to God appreciation. There is a reason why the passing of that work is not mourned. Rowing after whales. You're engaged in slaughterhouse work and you're up to your eyeballs in blood. I started writing *Close Quarters* in 1968. I'll hang the story on the work, the same as Melville. It struck me that folks back here not only did not know what it was like to be in an Army barracks, but also knew nothing about the war as work. In every sort of work there is a literal physical satisfaction that comes over you when a job's well done, a personal pride. But if you're an infantryman, your job is to kill people. "Close and engage" the lifers call it. I've heard historians refer to it as "state sanctioned murder." But it's still murder. And how can you possibly have any good feeling about that? The aftermath of a firefight is all exhaustion, and downrange it's all meat. In half an afternoon you are standing in a smell like no other in the world. The stink of body count corpses.

I was in mechanized infantry, a sort of junior armored cavalry. We had APCs, armored personnel carriers. Tracks. What exactly was the work? Well, there's a .50 caliber machine gun that weighs about a hundred pounds and throws a slug about the size of your thumb and can blow your head off at a mile. Joseph Heller's Snowden in *Catch-22* was a fifty gunner. That's what they used to shoot down Messerschmidts. A very serious weapon. I had never seen an APC before, but learned quickly because I was the driver. I was in a recon platoon, so we had four guys on each track. If you fuck up, three guys hump. You hump, but they hump, too. On the back were two M-60 machine guns. Basically, you're driving around in a 13-ton bunker. We had Chevy 283 V-8s with a four-barrel carburetor and a blower about the size of a room fan and a 90-gallon gasoline tank. So, you're always messing with machinery.

So I told stories about night ambushes, search and destroy missions, and firefights large and small. What you do with body count. Smoking grass, drinking ourselves stupid. I never heard the word marijuana until I went to Vietnam, and we smoked it all the time. Stories about how the war worked, the same as you would go at any strange "process." It's the same in Robert Mason's *Chickenhawk*. He talks about what a helicopter is, for what, the first 60 or 70 pages? And if there's one symbol of Vietnam it's the Huey chopper. Mason called it "hauling ass and trash." We just hauled ass.

Q: I remember a famous photograph of a truck pulling VC bodies behind it.

Heinemann: I don't need to see the picture. We did that a time or two. You get in a firefight and afterwards go out and do what we referred to as a dismount, just like the cavalry. Searching the bodies and making the count. You tie the heels together with commo wire, which is like extension cord, and drag them out to the road and leave them. There were some outfits that left playing cards but we never bothered with that. The strong inference was, "Fuck with us and this will happen to you." Sometimes we had to drag the bodies a good long way. That's what got to me about reading *The Iliad*. Achilles ties Hector's corpse to a pair of horses. He gives them a whack on the ass and Hector's body get dragged round and round the city until there was nothing left but what was tied at the ankles. How's that for "fuck you?"

We had maybe ten thousand rounds of ammunition, which will last you all day. Crates of hand grenades. M-79 grenade launchers with both high explosive rounds and canister rounds, which were 40-millimeter casings with double ought buck shot. The barrel was eight or nine inches long so you're walking around with a serious sawed-off shotgun. The M-16s back in those days were junk. I took an M-16 on my first ambush and fired three rounds and it jammed. Fuck this. So after that I took the M-60, the pig, we called it. You really did carry it like Sylvester Stallone (laughs). You tied a long strap to the barrel and the butt plate and slung it over your shoulder, and you've got Pancho Villa style bandoleers of ammunition. I had a 12-gauge shotgun for a while, and then an AK-47, which has be the best in the world.

You couldn't keep an M-16 clean enough. If I ever run into the motherfucker that sent that rifle overseas, I'm going to make short work of him. The other motherfucker I want to talk to is the asshole who sent gasoline-powered APCs. Just behind the driver is a 90-gallon gasoline tank. An engineer told me one gallon of gasoline is equivalent to 19 pounds of TNT and 19 pounds can blow the back of this house off.

Q: How effective was the armor?

Heinemann: It's inch and a quarter aluminum alloy. Small arms fire will ricochet. My track was all nicked up. By the way, it's the same armor that they make the Bradley Fighting Vehicle the Army uses nowadays. And they're both deathtraps. A rocket propelled grenade will go through [an] inch and half

aluminum alloy armor plate like spit through a screen. You hit the gas tank, the track goes up like the head of a match, mushroom cloud and all. Happened more than once. The drivers had their bodies separated from their heads. Many drivers got killed or burned to death. I ever run into the fucking genius who sent gas-powered to Vietnam, he and I are going to have a serious discussion. I would gladly do time in prison for the chance of showing Mr. Genius what I think of his scheme.

Q: Diesel wouldn't do the same thing?

Heinemann: Diesel will burn but it takes more to get it going. The only trick we had was to keep the tank full. That was the myth anyway. The RPG round has a magnesium core which burns of itself because it carries its own oxygen. So if you get whacked with an RPG, the shrapnel will burn right through you. Lots of casualties from that.

Q: It sounds like complicated machinery didn't work very well. What did work?

Heinemann: We used our bayonets to clean our nails and open our mail. Shotguns never failed. The M-79s were much coveted. The .45 pistols weren't much good beyond 25 or 30 feet but looked stylish. A lot of guys had personal weapons. A good friend of mine's father gave him a hand-made Bowie knife. We drove our tracks hard, but they were beaters to start with. Take a thing so ordinary as C-rations. We were once issued rations labeled October 1952. For Korea. And here's the one war souvenir I've got I cherish: my P-38 C-ration can opener. It's the only thing the government ever gave me that worked as advertised. I keep it on my key ring for luck. C-ration food was terrible. But a couple years ago I met a North Vietnamese army veteran and poet who said that they would have given anything to have C-rations. What they did was boil up this really godawful, rotgut wormy rice so it got real sticky and formed it into a log about a foot and a half long and carry it in their shirt. And that's what they ate.

Q: Another major enemy seems to be the "ticket punching lifers."

Heinemann: I have a strong memory of having it in for the lifers just as much as I had it in for the VC. One of the things almost nobody talks about is the fraggings. The boy scouts, the wannabe heroes, the John Waynes, the guys

who buy the bullshit, the control freaks who really think they're in charge, the guys who want their purple hearts and their little medals, I mean they really want it—the clowns who simply will not leave you alone—these were the guys who got fragged. Shithead lifers, the NCOs who were just assholes. Racist black sergeants, racist white officers. Look at it this way. When it was time to get rid of somebody, everybody was in on it, and there'd often be a pot. Everybody would kick in. And the easiest thing in the world was to fake a firefight at night, and somebody gets up behind the guy and simply shoots him. But the great appeal of hand grenades was you could booby-trap the guy's hooch and be, well, elsewhere. I read in Gibson's *The Perfect War* that the general who ordered the assault on Hamburger Hill wound up with a \$10,000 bounty on his head, but left for home before anyone could cash in. By the end of the war there'd been thousands of fraggings. But their names are on the Wall too.

Q: You published a short story "The Fragging" in the *Atlantic Monthly* a few years ago. Was that the start of a new novel?

Heinemann: That's the only short story I've ever published that was never intended to be anything but a short story. For a while I had it in the back of my mind to follow the guys "who knew of the matter" after they got home. But, no. No more war stories.

Q: Any exceptional lifers?

Heinemann: I've met a bunch since. Decent and intelligent men. When I was at Fort Knox we had a First Sergeant who got the entire gag. He was a full-blood Navaho Indian, First Sergeant Alva, and I will never forget him. Built like a fireplug. The day I left Knox he took me aside and said, "Heinemann, remember, this is not a white man's war. What do you say to that? "Um, yes, First Sergeant."

The best officer I knew was a University of Wisconsin ROTC graduate with a degree in history. He comes into the platoon, calls a meeting of the NCOs, and says, "Gentlemen, our job is to make sure everybody goes home in one piece." We look at him and say, "Lieutenant, this is a very good plan. How can we help you?" That's when we stopped doing a lot of the dumb things, like ambush every fucking night. Lieutenant Eric Opsahl was a prince. The lifers were there to punch their career tickets: get their medals and their promotions

and their overseas pay. This is what gets me about listening to pilots, any pilot, who say they “were just doing my job.” Well, they’re doing their job and punching their tickets. Pilots never had to get down on the ground and wallow around in the mess they’d made.

Q: So you saw the aftermath of air strikes?

Heinemann: I remember sitting around a mess hall kitchen table in the enlisted men’s club at Dau Tieng, which was a dirt floor tent with a sawhorse bar and couple of coolers full of semi-cold beer. We’d hear B-52 air strikes in the distance and the cans on the table would start dancing around. And the air strike is ten, fifteen miles away. Then they’d send us out to check on the damage. The bomb craters were just a swath, maybe a hundred meters wide and five hundred meters long. It was just a hole, a nothing. The first time I flew into Hanoi was back in 1990, sailing in to the airport. Broad swaths of bomb craters all over everything. This was what Henry Kissinger saw when he flew into Hanoi, what year was that, 1973? I wonder what he thought.

Q: *Paco’s Story* is a very painful book that you just go on reading anyway. Paco, unlike you, just didn’t find a voice.

Heinemann: It was like he couldn’t get up the breath. Here’s a guy who is probably a reflection of my younger brother. I hate to make it sound so pat. But you see it a lot. The war just choked some guys. Homeless veterans may well be the dictionary definition. My brother Philip came back and never said anything about the war. I could not shut up. Something happened to my brother in the two years he spent overseas that he simply could not get around. Lots of things are taken from you when you are soldier. Lots of things.

Q: Such as?

Heinemann: Ordinary human feeling. When you get R & R you have your choice of cities. I chose Tokyo. Everybody on the plane was hornier than a five peckered billy goat. I was 23 and I had a thousand dollars in my poke. In 1967 a thousand was a great deal of money. Got to Tokyo and signed into, I swear to God, the Perfect Room Hotel. Could you think of a better name for a whorehouse? Any room you pick is going to be a delight. I wanted to sleep with a woman, not to say fuck my brains out, and find out it was still possible for me to feel good in my body. Skip the date, skip the dinner, skip the

movie. And yeah, I found out I could. I have a strong hunch my brother found out he could not. When you're 19 you don't even know what has been taken from you. And, sometimes, as I say, you don't get it back.

Bullshit counseling by some chaplain isn't going to do it. A parade isn't going to do it. All the Veterans Administration dope in the world isn't going to do it. Getting on your knees and praying 20 hours a day to Saint Expedite isn't going to do it. You are strictly on your own to rediscover all of these things about what it is to be human, and humane. There are a lot of guys like Paco. You get characters like him in Shakespeare. There are Paco characters in the *Iliad*. Psychologists have jargoned it to death, calling it post-traumatic stress-disorder. The term I prefer came into use after the Civil War. Soldier's heart. It amounts to a deep sense of grief that does not go away. Paco is transformed into a piece of meat. He feels as if he's been left behind. Because the guys who are narrating the story are the 93 dead guys of his platoon and they aren't happy about being dead at all. So, it's an odd irony. Wishing you were dead. But Paco is not innocent. You don't find that out until pretty far along in the story. Paco is a pretty creepy guy.

Q: But the story is still surprisingly poignant.

Heinemann: I worked on that book for eight years and I came to appreciate was that everything contains its own irony. There is a shadow side, an irony, an opposite to everything. Some people say the story is overwritten because the description gets to be too much. But there's a texture to the story, just like there's a texture to everything. Look around. There's always more than one thing going on. I don't know about poignant. At bottom what I tried to say was, let's be honest about this.

Paco never says, "Why me?" It would never occur to him. That's whining. What makes you think you are so fucking special? The big wheel turns, so why not you? Then, at the same time, you have the energy of the dynamic of the war. The central scene is the rape. Gallagher drags the captured VC woman into a hooch and 40 guys rape her to death. They all understood that this was a moment of evil—but it couldn't have been any other way because the whole energy of the dynamic points right to that. Let me put it another way: war a special evil all by itself. The politest way to say it is that we were not pleasant people, and the war was not a pleasant business. We were not fun to be around. This is the thing about President Bush's determination to have a war

in the Middle East that just breaks my heart, because these stupid motherfuckers haven't the faintest idea what they are getting us into. And they're not going to be able get us out. Maybe the kindest thing you can say about President Bush is that he's just not smart.

Q: What do you anticipate?

Heinemann: The war going to radicalize more Muslims, and then look out. President Bush is going to turn this country even more so into a country of serious racists. During the Vietnam War it was "gooks." Now it'll be "raghead sandniggers," a slur I've heard they're using. There are already blacklists, and people being pulled over a million times. I saw a piece of film during those random sniper killings around Washington. They had pulled over a SUV with a woman and her kids, and the cop had the shotgun pointed right at her head though the windshield. Well, good morning to you, ma'am. Keep your hands on the wheel or I'll blow your fucking head off. The only thing I've seen since 9/11 is more nosy cops and snitches and trigger-happy air marshals. Try to get on a plane without being searched half to death, and hassled if you ain't right on the bubble. I had a security guard give me lip for my P-38. What's this? Turns out the Vietnam War is so long ago she had never seen one, or the cops either. See what happens when you walk into City Hall, or the Cook County Building. Up against the wall, motherfucker. Cops just love it. They get to be in charge.

Every epoch of war is a social catastrophe. Things accelerate. The changes are not just inventions and such. We're not talking penicillin. We're not talking jeeps. We're not talking Tang. We're talking about a serious hit on ordinary civil rights. What was Goldwater's phrase, extremism in defense of liberty? Where you going? What's your business here? It's only going to get worse, so the other side of the coin will be an explosion like the civil rights movement and the antiwar movement. When they start this war and the bodies bags start coming back by the planeload, maybe that's when folks are going to get religion.

Q: It looks like a purely chickenhawk production.

Heinemann: I'll go along with the war when I hear that the draft age blood kin of the Bushes and Cheneys and McCains sign on. The day I hear that the graduating class of the Harvard Business School has dropped out three weeks

shy of graduation and volunteered for Airborne Rangers, that's the day I'll go along with it. The U.S. government has had the last of me and mine. My son is draft age—and my daughter is draft age too—and I swear on the grave of my father that if Preston is drafted he and I are leaving the country. I don't want anything to do with it.

Q: Have you gone pacifist?

Heinemann: I'm old enough to know that when evil comes into the world you have to kill it. You're not going to buy them off, you're not going to negotiate with them because then you get Munich. The sticky part is, it depends on who is calling who evil. The Arabs, the Palestinians, clearly have a legitimate bitch with the U.S. and the Israelis. The one true thing that President Bush has said is "He tried to kill my daddy." On my block that means his argument with Saddam Hussein is strictly family business. As far as I am concerned his moral authority to conduct this war does not extend farther than you can throw a chair off the porch of his ranch house in Texas. It's none of my business and it's none of the business of any of the draft age men that I know, kids on this block, my nephews, the kids I've been teaching down at DePaul. The war is about oil, and the Bush family business is oil. They're going to make a fortune while the rest of us take it in the neck, and the groundpounders, not to mention working-stiff Arabs, are going to take it up the ass. It's amazing how this National Guard no-show has got everybody cranked up.

Q: Back to literature. A reviewer of your comic novel *Cooler By The Lake* counted about forty war references amid all the wisecracks.

Heinemann: It took two and a half years to write. My daughter Sarah said it was the first time she heard laughing come from my studio. It was great fun to write. I tried to get even with just about everything that irritated me in Chicago. Stupid cops, dumb baseball teams. Rum-dumb politicians. The references to war? Well, you can't get away from them. The stock market. Football. Politics. The evening news. Pick a topic and you get war jargon.

Q: You are going back to Vietnam on a Fulbright Grant. When did you first return and did you have the heebie-jeebies?

Heinemann: In 1988 I was invited to go on a genuine writers' junket to China for two weeks. That group was headed by Harrison Salisbury and it was a great tickle to hang out with him. The China trip was an ah-ha moment. I really do like hanging out in this part of the world. The Forbidden City. What a place. Then we went out to the Great Wall. You look out and there's nothing out there but scrubby mountains and you try to imagine guard duty. It must have been a stone fucking bore. Sort of like the Kentucky hills and you've got to know that on the other side of that is more hills. Or a zillion Mongols on horseback. Then we went to see the terra cotta warriors at Xian. That snapped my head back. They are modeled after real guys so all the heads are unique. Folks on the trip said they saw soldiers that looked like me, that had my face, which was pretty spooky.

Q: Did you check it out?

Heinemann: I don't need to know that I was a soldier in a previous life.

Q: Do you put any store in reincarnation?

Heinemann: I'm not going to say it doesn't happen. But if does—good God. Belt whippings. Again? High school. Again? Soldier. Again?

Anyway, after the China trip I started thinking about going back to Vietnam. Then in 1990 I got an invite to join a delegation of American veteran writers to travel to Hanoi and sit around and bullshit with the Vietnamese writers association. The group was, ahem, in no particular order (laughter) Phil Caputo, Larry Rottman, W.D. Ehrhart, Bruce Weigl, Yusef Komunyakaa. Yusef is a black poet who got the Pulitzer Prize for *Neon Vernacular* a couple years ago. This is going to look so dumb on paper but there's a kind of aura about him. He is perhaps the most naturally elegant man I've ever met. By the time we landed in Hanoi, I couldn't wait. The city that had always been forbidden to me, even to my imagination. The long and short of it is, I love going back. By 1990 it was already a cliché that American veterans got a more warm welcome from the Vietnamese than we got when we came home. As a general thing Americans wanted to shame us. Well, fuck that. And I don't go back to heal, God help us, or have one of those famous crying jags. It is a beautiful country, and there is an ease and a grace that I deeply appreciate. The food is great, and the women are beautiful, and riding the train is all kick.

Q: Which Vietnamese writers did you meet?

Heinemann: A fellow named Le Luu, who is basically the Ernest Hemingway of Vietnam. Another fellow named Pham Tien Duat wrote a poem called “White Circle” which is probably most famous Vietnamese poem to come out of the war. And filmmaker Nguyen Quang Sang, who lived ten years in the Cu Chi tunnels. He still had the look of a guy you want on your side in a bar fight.

Q: Did you meet Bao Ninh?

Heinemann: I met him in 1997 when a bunch of us went over. He came to Boston three years ago. I have great respect for Bao Ninh.

Q: Does *Sorrows of War* seem a counterpart to *Close Quarters* and *Paco's Story*?

Heinemann: I am not going to compare anything I've written to that. The one thing I know about the literature that came out of that war is that there is a sub-genre of ghost stories. I don't know if there is anything comparable in other war literature but in Vietnamese and American writing that came out of the war there is a strong streak of that. I guess you'd say that the voice of the war is speaking.

Q: Please describe Bao Ninh. What is he like?

Heinemann: Bao Ninh is a pen name; it's the name of his village. No one calls him Ninh, his first name in Vietnamese fashion. It's Bao Ninh. I don't know if I've ever seen anybody drink as hard. He drinks with what Tennessee Williams would probably refer to as “some dedication.” When people found out he liked Jack Daniels everyone was laying fifths on the guy. I would be the last person in the world to tell Bao Ninh to stop drinking. But you could see it on his face. He's one of the few Vietnamese I've met who actually looks his age. Bao Ninh just looks like he never had an easy day in his life. Never.

He didn't write a lick until he was in his 40s. The story I heard is that in classes and lectures he would sit in the back and drink. Never took a note. Basically, with *Sorrows of War*, he invented a form. I told him that the story just gave me chills. The beginning of the story where the guy strings his hammock above a truckload of North Vietnamese MIA corpses while they are

driving through what they refer to as the valley of screaming souls. Whoa, what a way to start a book. Anybody who thinks that the Vietnamese don't have any ordinary human feelings or that they are somehow evil people should read this book.

Q: Absolutely. Did you click when you met?

Heinemann: I think he is the first Vietnamese writer I really connected with. He and I shared a great deal. He came to writing because he had a story, not the other way around. He's not university trained; he has no background in literature, particularly. He was an ordinary grunt, drafted in 1968, and was in a battalion of 500 guys who walked it down the Ho Chi Minh trail which took, you know, six months. He was in the final battle for Tan Son Nhut Air Base in 1975. He told me that the morning of the last day of the war there were twelve guys left from the original battalion of 500. By the end of the day there were three. And he was as pissed off as any American veteran I've met, and pretty much said so in his novel. Give him credit for that. I once asked him as a soldier, as an ordinary, everyday garden variety, ground-pounding grunt, what was the hardest thing he had to do. He said it was to bury all his friends. That's when I stopped complaining about how hard I had it.

Q: When you go back this trip, what do you aim to do in Vietnam?

Heinemann: I just put my Vietnam train travel book in the mail. Vietnam has this funky little narrow gauge railroad. There is no better way to see the country. The original impulse for the book, my question, was who are these guys? How did they do this? What aspects of national character gave them the resources. I mean, on paper, we were unbeatable. Right? The lifers in Washington were saying these were a bunch of fucking dirt farmers. Vietnam was going to be a walkover. Right?

I'm going on a Fulbright to collect, transcribe, and translate Vietnamese folktales, about the cleanest expression of a people's imagination and self-image as you can find. But my real work is a "family novel" I've had in the back of my mind for 10 years and more, and I want to write it in classic, Grimm Brothers, folktale style. In the last ten or fifteen years I've developed a serious interest in folklore and mythology. It seems all the elements of story have been there from the beginning. It's about as pure a story form as you can possibly get.

Q: You've already written about the legendary mountain near your base camp.

Heinemann: The Nui Ba Den. What we called the Black Virgin Mountain. Everybody I know who has ever been around it remembers it with great warmth. It's like putting Mount McKinley out in the middle of Kansas. It was the one thing that we saw everyday that didn't have anything to do with war. When I go back to Vietnam and folks ask me where I served, I say Cu Chi, Dau Tieng and Tay Ninh. But when I mention Nui Ba Den, absolutely every Vietnamese I've ever met, north or south, man or woman, young or old, knows the mountain and knows the story. A young woman waits for her soldier-husband to return and he never does, and her faith and loyalty was so—what's the phrase?—thorough and poignant, that when she died her spirit became the mountain. How's that for the origin of a place. And that fact that every Vietnamese knows the story says something very special about them. And even though we had no idea of the story, and probably wouldn't have cared, that image of the mountain touched us in a way that got tucked someplace until we needed it. Nui Ba Den is an astonishing place.

Q: You've said that you regret not having the chance to meet James Jones who was also in the 25th division, though in another war.

Heinemann: I just loved his writing. And I've heard he was a real character. He wrote about war from the point of view an ordinary soldier using ordinary language. If memory serves, he was the first American writer to use the word "fuck." *From Here to Eternity* and *Thin Red Line*, his World War II books, are his strongest. He really did call a spade a spade. He came back with an attitude not dissimilar to the soldiers coming back from Vietnam. Jones wrote about guys like Prewitt who would be PFCs for 30 years. Jones really nailed it. The moment Pearl Harbor was bombed, that all changed, of course, but what was preserved were the endless lifer stupidities. Jones died the week my first book was published. The same week, by the way, as my father.

Paul Fussell, a serious scholar, was a platoon leader in the army in Europe. I did get a chance to tell him what his writing meant to me. From "The Great War and Modern Memory" you got a sense of what being in a trench was about, living in a ditch for four years and going mad. He said he will always look at life through the eyes of a pissed-off infantryman, that there is something about being a soldier that does not go away. True enough.

You read *The Thin Red Line* and you understand that a soldier's work is never going to change. You can only mechanize it so much. I'd love to be there the day all the computers go crunch. Now what, colonel? You can bomb a thing to kingdom come, but there is a point at which you must occupy the ground, and the pilots ain't gonna do it. The guys who go and stand on it are the guys with the hundred pound packs and the serious guns. And by the time they get there, these are the guys who will slit your throat for your shoes. The guys who develop what psychologists refer to as combat psychosis, your basic, take no prisoners, stone fucking psychotic. There are those days when guys like that were worth their weight in gold.

Q: In that case, how do you view Bob Kerrey and the massacre scandal?

Heinemann: Bob Kerrey should be ashamed of himself. And he probably is. But only because somebody blabbed. He got a Bronze Star for murdering those people, and he wore it. A month later he gets in a scrape, losses a good bit of a leg, but they gave him the Congressional Medal of Honor. How dare he trade on that. If you want to be an officer, you had better have your shit together. You're the one who has to say no. Like the helicopter pilot, Thompson, at My Lai, who landed his chopper between Calley's troops and the Vietnamese civilians. Give that guy a medal. The heat of the moment? I don't buy that. Of course, it happens, but you don't let it hang for 30 years. You're supposed to man up to it, Bob. It's something the same with John Kerry when he voted for the Iraq war resolution. What the fuck was that? He is definitely off my list. John, where is the moral outrage you had in '71 at Dewey Canyon III when the VVAW showed up to throw their medals away? He ought to know better. And Hilary Clinton betrayed herself as an opportunist of the very first rank. Talk about punching your ticket.

Q: Were you ever involved in VVAW?

Heinemann: I often laugh and say during the 1970s I hardly stepped off the porch. I hardly remember the music. I was, what would be the word, definitely inner-directed. I thought the one good thing I could do was write a good book. I'd been invited to antiwar rallies, and such. But the VVAW? It was run by officers, and I pretty much had it with them.

Q: Finally, did you ever feel your working class background was a disadvantage?

Heinemann: No. Looking at the world from down where the rubber meets the road has a long and honorable history. Sam Clemens never finished grammar school, and he did just fine. John Steinbeck wound up with the Nobel Prize. I do know that I had to start from square one and read the books I was already supposed to have read. Well, you get to read with a very clean eye. And it goes straight back to the energy of ambition that I brought to school and the fact that my teacher gave me a leg up and a good shove. A great gift. Probably the only disadvantage I feel is that I don't have much of an organized background in American literature. I'm still working on Shakespeare, still working on Faulkner. I'm not a philosopher, and God knows I'm not a scholar. I'm a storyteller who got lucky. I can't think of doing any other work. If writing were taken away from me I would wither. Anybody can be a barstool bullshit artist. I take great pride in my craft. And let's get this straight: there's nothing cathartic about writing as a craft. Just because you write it down, put it in a box, and send it out of the house does not mean it's gone. The people who write because they think it's therapeutic are, well, I don't know what they are, but they're not writers. You have to let the chips fall where they're going to fall. I do know this. I will always be able to reach back and touch the war and find a story. That's a mellow irony of the richest kind. And the stories have less and less to do with the war, and more and more are, well, just stories.

Introductory remarks to the 'Strictly Confidential' UN Report on likely catastrophes in the event of war in Iraq

by
Irene Gendzier

The 'strictly confidential' Dec 10, 2002 UN report on "Likely Humanitarian Scenarios" in the event of a US-led war on Iraq, is now public. Its reception, to judge by the limited extent of media response, has been one of near silence. The warning of imminent catastrophe has been treated as covert information, in deference, perhaps, to claims coming from Washington and London. Promises of a 'surgical strike' special on Baghdad from such sources are at obvious odds with the nature of the UN report and others like it. The scenarios depicted in these documents are of another type altogether, they are reminiscent of the searing images of Guernica writ large across the landscape of a suffering humanity.

The warnings of the human toll of war have come from other sources, as well as the United Nations. Nearly a month before the internal document of the UN that appears below was issued, the British affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), Medact, issued its own report on anticipated "Collateral Damage" in the event of war in Iraq. The title was a disconcerting reminder of the dehumanization of the first Gulf War- in official US parlance. The Nov. 12, 2002 report was released by affiliates of the IPPNW throughout the world. Among the likely scenarios that it considered were those of famine, epidemic, the possible deployment of chemical and biological weapons, the release of radioactive material, and the risk of nuclear strikes leading to an estimated 4 million civilian casualties.¹

The UN report on "Likely Humanitarian Scenarios," was issued on December 10 as an internal, 'strictly confidential,' report, one that included

¹ The text of the "Collateral Damage" report is on the following websites: www.medact.org and www.ippnew.org

the information that the UN was seeking some \$37.3 million to deal with the consequences of war in Iraq.²

In the interim, the UN report was leaked and appeared on the website of the British Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq. Its assessment, to which the following contributed: UNICEF, the UNHCR, WHO, WFP, and the UN Health Sectoral Working Group in Iraq, provides an overall survey of the probable military targets of war and its anticipated human and environmental consequences.

Distinguishing between the provinces of the North, South and center, where Baghdad and outlying provinces are identified as likely targets of aerial bombardment and ground assaults, the report anticipates a total breakdown in communications, transport and electricity, a cessation of oil production and export, and at the public health level, crises of stark proportions as a result of the inaccessibility of sanitation and health services, potable water, nutrition and medical assistance. The risks of famine and epidemics are considered as likely, with the elderly and very young, the sick and disabled, the institutionalized and displaced, as among the most vulnerable. To this must be added the risks of unexploded ordnance and existing minefields.

UN estimates indicate that out of a total population of 26.5 million, about 23 million will be in need of “food and necessities,” including “health supplies,” while “emergency shelter” will be required by approximately 3.6 million, with another 1.4 million refugees in need of assistance and a possible figure of 500,000 become “direct and indirect casualties.”

Finally, in a report whose political assumptions with respect to war are held in careful check, there is nonetheless recognition that the agencies of the UN “delivering humanitarian assistance will need to interact with the military authorities on the ground. Such interaction will have to occur regardless of whether the attack is sanctioned by the Security Council or not, although the circumstances will obviously influence the relationship.” Further, as report indicates, such interaction will also be affected by the extent to which the military on the ground is involved with “the direct delivery of assistance.” The US Department of Defense is cited as “the most proactive military

² The UN report may be accessed through the website of the British Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq: <http://www.casi.org.uk>.

establishment in the prosecution of such role-see the extensive utilization of 'military/civil affairs' staff in Afghanistan.”

In an article that appeared in *The Observer* in late December, UN officials complained of Washington's lack of responsiveness to their warnings of the possible consequences of war.³ For those willing to 'listen,' the UN report follows.

³ “Aid groups warn of disaster in Iraq,” *The Observer* (UK), Dec. 22, 2002.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

10 December 2002

LIKELY HUMANITARIAN SCENARIOS

Introduction

1. In presenting the present paper it is not presumed that war is not inevitable. However, for planning purposes, and as requested, certain assumptions are made in preparing for eventualities should hostilities occur. Unlike the progression of the military intervention in 1991, a future confrontation is expected to develop beyond the preparatory, and relatively short, aerial bombardment of infrastructure, towns, and cities into potentially a large scale and protracted ground offensive, supported by aerial and conventional bombardment. The resultant devastation would undoubtedly be great. Initially, access to those in need would either be denied by one or other of the protagonists or severely hampered by security or safety concerns. Additionally, logistics, particularly the ability to move with any degree of freedom, will be a major constraint.

2. There is a temptation in some quarters to equate the situation following any future military intervention in Iraq, with the population's ability to cope in 1991. Such comparisons are not valid, as the sustentative majority of the population, immediately prior to the events of 1991, were in full employment and had cash and material assets available to them to cope with the crisis. Aside from now not having been gainfully employed for some time, during the intervening period, all except the most privileged have completely exhausted their cash assets and have also in most cases disposed of their material assets. Accordingly, the bulk of the population is now totally dependent on the Government of Iraq for a majority, if not all, of their basic needs and, unlike the situation in 1991, they have no way of coping if they cannot access them: the sanctions regime, if anything, has served to increase dependence on the Government as almost the sole provider.

3. There is also the temptation to draw comparisons between the situation in Afghanistan following the military intervention of 2001/2002 and the situation, which is likely to be facing Iraq in a post conflict scenario. Aside from having similar population figures -- almost 26 million in Afghanistan

and approximately 26.5 million in Iraq -- such comparisons are simply invalid. The population in Afghanistan is predominantly rural. Furthermore, over time the Afghan population has become used to being less reliant on the state -- there has been no all-encompassing "state machinery" in Afghanistan -- and the Afghans have therefore been more self-reliant. The situation in Iraq, however, has been the reverse: a relatively urbanized population, with the state providing the basic needs of the population as a matter of Government policy. As households have generally become poorer during the course of the sanctions regime, the Iraqi people have become even more reliant on the state to meet their basic needs.

4. Furthermore, notwithstanding the sanctions regime, the Iraqi people are relatively sophisticated in their needs. Quite simply, the Iraqi society has become accustomed to a reasonable standard of services that are provided under the auspices of, or directly by, the state. However, with the foreseen degradation of infrastructure in general, and electricity in particular, on which the provision of the services concerned are heavily dependent on, many of these services are not likely to be available following a conflict.

5. Accordingly, in assessing the likely humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people during the post conflict situation, the following assumptions would appear to be justified:

[page 2]

- a. The electricity network will be seriously degraded because of damage to generating plants and the transmission and distribution networks. The damage to the electricity network will also result in collateral reductions in capacity in all sectors, particularly water and sanitation as well as health.
- b. The port of Umm Qasr will be largely unavailable as it will in all probability either be blockaded or suffer significant damage in the preliminary stages of any hostilities. Accordingly, it cannot reliably be predicted whether any capacity in the port will be available for humanitarian activities.
- c. The railway system will be significantly degraded as a result of damage to bridges, culverts and tracks.
- d. Road transportation vehicles and depots will suffer considerable

damage and, as a consequence, there will be a significant degradation of the already poor transportation system.

- e. As Iraq is trisected by two major river systems which flow north-south and as most, if not all, major bridges will be destroyed or damaged, east-west movement of goods and people will be on a restricted basis. Furthermore, the rivers are of such a depth that fording is not possible and there is an almost total absence of lighters, ferries and the like.
- f. Damage to the electricity network will result in collateral reductions in capacity in all sectors, particularly water and sanitation as well as health.
- g. There could be significant damage to existing Government stocks of all commodities.
- h. The production and export of crude oil as well as production of petroleum products mostly for domestic consumption will have ceased, and the facilities holding existing reserve stocks will have been significantly damaged.

[page 3 withheld]

[page 4]

Needs Assessment

11. As stated earlier in paragraph 2 above, there are some 60 per cent of the population -- 16 million people -- highly dependent on the monthly "food basket" -- they "consume" all the commodities provided, (by consuming or selling part to mitigate other needs), as they have no other means with which to provide for other essential requirements.

12. In the three northern governorates, there will be an immediate need to establish an alternative source of supply for the items provided in the "food basket", for the entire population of about over 3.7 million people: the population in the three northern governorates. Given the probable course of the conflict, the current established delivery system of foodstuffs and necessities from Mosul and Kirkuk is not likely to be available from the outset of hostilities because of their location, south of the dividing line. Of the total population in the three northern governorates, approximately 2.2

million will be highly dependent on the food distribution system.

13. The loss of electricity to Dahuk, while having major consequences at the household level, should not immediately impact the provision of humanitarian services. Assuming the level of conflict is low throughout the three northern governorates, and based on the recent UN observations of small and medium sized electricity generators in those governorates, and a 29 MW generators in each of the three governorates, there appears to be sufficient capacity available, supplemented by the delivery pipeline of additional generators under already approved contracts to provide backup electricity supply to "emergency" facilities. This is a factor that will be taken into account when determining the final position of the small and medium generators already made available under the humanitarian programme.

14. It will be necessary, however, to establish a supply line for fuel. It is estimated that in the three northern governorates the monthly requirement of fuel¹ is approximately 30,000,000 lts. of gasoline, approximately 30,000,000 lts of diesel, about 40,000,000 lts of Kerosene, and about 10,000 tons of cooking gas. However, there is very limited storage capacity in the three northern governorates and the available refining capacity would be insignificant.

15. Elsewhere in the country, particularly in the "Centre Region" and "Baghdad", given the likely intensity of any conflict, particularly in the preparatory and initial stages, it is probably that the infrastructure will be severely damaged as a result of aerial and ground bombardment or by the withdrawing Government forces. Infrastructure, particularly that relating to oil production; transport, i.e., vehicles and depots; ports; railways; roads and bridges; and electricity production can expect to be especially hard hit. As a result, the availability of potable water is likely to be curtailed extensively. The infrastructure, including private and commercial vehicles, which are still available, may well be allocated by the Government to other than humanitarian purposes. In any event, the logistical aspects of the humanitarian response will require a substantial amount of specialized assets and the absence of such assets in sufficient quantities will probably be a major constraint, until some degree of rehabilitation, albeit of a temporary nature, occurs. Fuel, in the worst case, may have to be imported.

¹ Based on the latest estimates by the United Nations personnel operating in the three northern governorates.

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16. However, it is improbable that the level of services being provided by the Government would cease simultaneously for the total population. Rather, it is probable that there would be a progressive run down and eventual cessation of distribution of commodities and the provision of services. If one presumes that potential military intervention will roll simultaneously from the south and the north, the peripheral governorates of Basrah, Maysan, Thi Qar, Muthana, Najaf, Kerbala, and Qadisiyah in the south and Ninewa and Tameem in the north will be immediately affected.

17. The population in immediate need of humanitarian intervention and that are expected to be accessible, i.e., those in the south, would then total 5.4 million², to which must be added a further 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees³, a part of the estimated 900,000 destined for Iran and the 50,000 to Saudi Arabia, from Baghdad and the Centre Governorates. Accordingly, the total caseload beneficiaries would total 7.4 million. While there will requirements that will need to be addressed in the other governorates, as previously stated, it is considered that either access will be denied by the warring parties or it will be impracticable because of the prevailing security situation.

19. Given the 21 or 22 days a month that food stuffs are being distributed, approximately one million people are entitled to receive their ration on any of those days. It can also be assumed that of these 600,000, or 60 percent of the recipients referred to in paragraph 11 above, will be highly reliant on the ration for their household food requirements. Additionally, because the distribution cycle relates to distribution agents, and not to individuals, commodities will not be available in certain localities, should the agents concerned do not receive their consignments or not be in place. Accordingly, the need will be concentrated in these areas rather than evenly distributed throughout the country. Such pockets will unfortunately exist in each district and governorate.

20. The recent trend by the Government of issuing the monthly food basket on a two monthly cycle potentially places more food in the household.

However, based on anecdotal information, the World Food Programme (WFP) believes that the many poor families, and therefore with the least food security, are selling the "additional" food received to generate income in order to meet their other essential requirements. The current shortage in some commodities from the food basket, especially pulses -- the main source of protein -- also mitigates the benefit of the increased issue of food supply. As a result, most household food reserves would not last two months if distribution were interrupted or suspended.

21. Throughout the country, there are some 43,000 Food and Flour agents⁴, and the monthly food distribution is dependent on the present system continuing to function to a high degree of efficiency. This institution is immense, and any disruption to its organization would seriously hamper the distribution of food, as referred to in paragraph 19 above. Because of the degree of dependence of the population as a whole on the monthly distribution of food and other necessities, it is not practical to target segments of the community directly when distributing foodstuffs. Accordingly, the continued use of food and flour agents is probably the most practicable medium for food distribution in the post conflict phase. Preserving what is presently there and replacing those portions of the network that suffer during the conflict phase, must be accorded high priority.

22. With regard to the health sector, there will generally be some four months stocks of basic pharmaceuticals and medical supplies in the country to meet normal demand. This should not be

² The 'war affected' population of the 'Southern Governorates'.

³ There will be movement both to and from the southern governorates, which it is assessed will, in terms of gross numbers, be equal.

⁴ Based on information provided to WFP by the Government.

[page 6]

read, however, as an indication that there is a full range of medical items available, as there are some particular items which are presently in short supply, or non-existent. The expected increase in the instances of diarrhoeal disease and respiratory infections resulting from the conditions experienced in a post-conflict scenario, for example the absence of potable water and contaminated air (e.g., should oil fields be put ablaze, similar to what

happened in Kuwait), as well as over-crowding, traumatic injuries, and a lack of refrigeration, would translate into an increased demand and consumption of medical supplies and drugs, rendering the existing stocks inadequate.

23. It is also likely that in the early stages there will be a large segment of the population requiring treatment for traumatic injuries, either directly conflict-induced or from the resulting devastation. Given the population outlined earlier, as many as 500,000⁵ could require treatment to a greater or lesser degree as a result of direct or indirect injuries.

24. The children under 5, pregnant and lactating women, and IDPs will be particularly vulnerable because of the likely absence of a functioning primary health care system in a post conflict situation. In the centre and south it is estimated that these groups represent a total caseload of 5.2 million people⁶, 4.2 million under 5, with one million pregnant and lactating women, plus a further two million IDPs. Using purely per capita ratios and "poverty and environmental patterns", 1.23 million of these will be in the southern governorates, to which the United Nations is more likely to have access, and accordingly will need immediate humanitarian interventions. This figure requires further refinement in order to take account of the infirm, the chronically ill, and the elderly.

25. Furthermore, the outbreak of diseases in epidemic if not pandemic proportions is very likely. Diseases such as cholera and dysentery thrive in the environment, which will prevail and as a result of circumstances and the present low vaccination rates for measles, meningitis and the like will be ever present. When determining the requirement for pharmaceuticals and medical supplies these factors must be considered.

26. As with other sectors, the requirement for health supplies will vary with time. Although some of the initial dependency will reduce with time, for example as conflict-related injuries are treated in a particular area, and as some find alternative solutions to satisfy their needs, others will become dependent on the system. It is probable that, in the foreseeable future, the number of additional beneficiaries will exceed those who may find alternative solutions. Accordingly, the need in this area will continue to grow in the short and medium term, because of the general environment and the limited alternatives available to the population.

27. It is estimated that the nutritional status of some 3.03 million⁷ persons countrywide will be dire and that they will require therapeutic feeding. This consists of 2.03 million severely and moderately malnourished children under five and one million pregnant and lactating women. While not all the vulnerable children identified in paragraph 24 above will require therapeutic feeding, all pregnant and lactating women will. Furthermore, using a straight population ratio, a little over half a million of the above persons, will be in the southern governorates. Among the most vulnerable are the approximately 5,000 persons⁸ confined to institutions, comprising orphaned children, the severely handicapped, and children in detention, and 21,000 elderly⁹. To those figures must be added patients in hospitals -- the total capacity of hospital beds is almost 27,000¹⁰ and although

⁵ Based on WHO estimates of direct, 100,000, and indirect, 400,000, casualties.

⁶ UNICEF estimate.

⁷ UNICEF estimate.

⁸ Based on information provided to UNICEF and WFP.

⁹ Based on information provided to WFP.

¹⁰ Data provided by the UN Health Sectoral Working Group in Iraq.

[page 7]

occupancy rates are not known they must be assumed to be high -- and prisoners. Although the number is not large, the dire circumstances in which they presently exist can only become worse and, consequently, their needs critical.

28. Water treatment requires electric power and as this will, in all probability, be severely disrupted by any conflict, it is highly likely that it will remain so for some time. Accordingly, the availability of potable water will be at a premium. UNICEF estimates that some 39 percent of the population will need to be provided with potable water -- for a short while -- by treatment plants that have 'stand-by' electricity generation, although the water supply will be rationed. The access to potable water at present is not evenly distributed -- 70 percent of urban facilities have emergency generation while the percentage in the rural facilities is only 11 percent.

29. Given the population affected in the southern governorates -- but not including IDPs and potential refugees but who have not yet left Iraq -- (a

total of 5.4 million as indicated in paragraph 17 above), the immediate requirement would be to provide access to clean water for some 4.07 million people.¹¹ It should also be noted that chemicals required for the treatment of water, i.e., chlorine and aluminium sulphate, and other consumables for the treatment plants with generation capacity will, in all probability, be limited.

30. The sanitation system is another matter of serious concern. At present 500,000 metric tons of raw effluent are pumped daily into fresh water sources. At present, there are approximately 5 million people, 4 million of whom reside in Baghdad¹², who have access to a sewerage network, relying on pumping stations, which are connected to the electricity grid. It is estimated by UNICEF that only 10 percent of these stations have backup generators. Lest this become a greater health hazard than it is at present, 5 million persons who are presently reliant on a sewerage network would require assistance with sanitation facilities.

31. As in the case of health care, the dependency will in all probability continue to increase and a large proportion of the population is likely to remain dependent on outside assistance for an extended period. The rehabilitation of not only the electricity grid but also the water distribution network should receive most urgent attention.

32. During any conflict, and in the immediate phase following it, a significant segment of the population will be displaced. The devastation of structures could be great. While in the urban areas, shelter will be easier to find through occupation of partially destroyed buildings as well as easier availability of make shift building materials, such options will not be available to those in rural areas -- for the local inhabitants as well as IDPs who have moved from the cities and towns into the rural areas -- in view of the absence of "makeshift" accommodation and recyclable building materials.

33. In the initial stages of the emergency, access to those in need will be difficult. Accordingly while a large proportion of the population will initially be displaced, by the time humanitarian access is practicable, many of those displaced will have returned or found makeshift accommodation. Under the circumstances, a figure of 25 percent of the "war affected" population requiring some form of assistance seems to be realistic, although this figure would require further confirmation. Such a figure represents a beneficiary population of some 2 million requiring assistance with shelter. The numbers

will of course fluctuate as more people are displaced and others find or construct semi-permanent housing.

¹¹ UNICEF estimates.

¹² UNICEF estimates.

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34. The beneficiary population will also present some particular concerns. It is to be expected that among those displaced, there will be significant numbers of 'unaccompanied minors' and 'female headed households'.

35. It is estimated that there will eventually be some 900,000 Iraqi refugees requiring assistance, of which 100,000 will be in need of immediate assistance¹³. The number of refugees may in fact be much higher, although many of those with the resources and skills to resettle elsewhere have already done so. There is also the likelihood of transit camps established in Iraq adjacent to borders, with a population of perhaps as many as 500,000 people.¹⁴

36. The number of refugees presently in Iraq, for which UNHCR is responsible, is approximately 130,000 persons¹⁵. While these will, in all probability, remain in country, perhaps joining those displaced, it is probable that UNHCR will initially be unable to provide the support required.

37. The absence of a mine action programme in the center and south will exacerbate the difficulties experienced by the population vis-à-vis mine injuries. There is also presently no mine awareness education in the centre and south. While the rural population has acquired some knowledge in living in a mine-infested environment, most of the urban population will not have the information required.

38. The areas along the borders with neighbouring countries of Iraq, and some areas around the dividing line with the three northern governorates presently under the control of Kurdish local authorities, are 'protected' by barrier minefields, and will therefore present a formidable hazard to refugees and IDPs. Additionally, the conflict will result in unexploded ordnance (UXO) becoming commonplace, particularly in the towns and cities, causing

considerable casualties.

Summary of Scenarios

39. **Emergency:** The immediate humanitarian interventions are likely to require:

- a. Bridging, material handling and transport¹⁶.
- b. Food and necessities for some 5.4 million people¹⁷.
- c. Health supplies to treat injuries for approximately 100,000¹⁸.
- d. Health supplies to treat the highly vulnerable for up to 1.23 million¹⁹.
- e. Health supplies to cater for the ongoing needs of 5.4 million²⁰.
- f. Nutrition supplies for 0.54 million²¹.
- g. Water treatment equipment for 5.4 million²².
- h. Chemicals and consumables for 5.4 million²³.
- i. Sanitation materials and chemicals²⁴.

¹³ UNHCR estimates.

¹⁴ UNHCR estimate.

¹⁵ Based on UNCHR existing case load.

¹⁶ See paragraph 3.

¹⁷ See paragraph 17.

¹⁸ See paragraph 23.

¹⁹ See paragraph 24.

²⁰ The 'war affected' population of the 'Southern Governorates'.

²¹ See paragraph 27.

²² The 'war affected' population of the 'Southern Governorates'.

²³ The 'war affected' population of the 'Southern Governorates'.

²⁴ See paragraph 29.

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- j. Total range of services for 2 million IDPs, some of whom may well become refugees. The number that may eventually be in this category cannot be assessed with any confidence.²⁵
- k. Emergency shelter for 1.4 million²⁶.
- l. Family reunion facilities for unaccompanied minors.
- m. Facilities for 100,000 Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries²⁷.
- n. Mine Action activities, (demining, UXO clearance, mine awareness).

40. **Protracted Humanitarian Requirements:** Following the immediate requirements referred to in paragraph 39 above, the humanitarian interventions are likely to be required for a protracted period of time, certainly longer than one year, and may include:

- a. Further bridging, material handling, and transport²⁸.
- b. Milling and iodizing capacity²⁹.
- c. Food and necessities for, at a minimum, 23 million³⁰.
- d. Health supplies to treat injuries for approximately 0.5 million³¹.
- e. Health supplies to treat up to 23 million³².
- f. Nutrition items for 3.03 million³³.
- g. Water treatment equipment for 18.24 million³⁴.
- h. Chemicals and consumables for 18.24 million³⁵.
- i. Sanitation materials and chemicals³⁶.
- j. Total range of services for 2 million IDPs, some of whom may well become refugees. The number that may eventually be in this category cannot be assessed with any confidence³⁷.
- k. Emergency shelter for 3.6 million³⁸.
- l. Family reunion facilities for unaccompanied minors.
- m. Facilities for 1.4 million Iraqi refugees, 900,000 entering neighbouring countries and 500,000 remaining along the border but inside Iraq³⁹.
- n. Initiatives to invigorate the economy.
- o. Livestock and plant production materials.
- p. Mine Action activities, (demining, UXO clearance, mine awareness).

Socio-economic recovery of Iraq

41. It is essential that efforts be made as early as is practicable to begin the long process of recovery. It would not seem prudent to replace the "state provider" with a "humanitarian provider". This will only be possible if alternative coping mechanisms are put in place early in order to provide opportunities for employment of one form or other. It will also be critical to the success of any humanitarian intervention if the agricultural sector is revived most urgently.

²⁵ See paragraph 17.

²⁶

²⁷ See paragraph 35.

²⁸ See paragraph 5.

²⁹ Requirement to iodize locally available salt and mill locally available cereals.

³⁰ Population of the centre and south.

³¹ See paragraph 23.

³² Population of the centre and south.

³³ See paragraph 27.

³⁴ Population of the centre and south, less the IDPs.

³⁵ Population of the centre and south, less the IDPs.

³⁶ See paragraph 29.

³⁷ See paragraph 17.

³⁸ Assessed population in the centre and south in need of emergency shelter.

³⁹ See paragraph 35.

[begin page 10]

Debt protection

42. A key facet of any rejuvenation of the economy will be the continued protection of both the public sector and individuals from external debts, variously estimated at between \$100 and \$150 billion. This is currently the case under the sanctions regime. Although the relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions may be revised or the present restrictions may be modified in a post conflict scenario, positive consideration should be given to maintaining -- at the least during the initial stage -- those provisions, which afford the protection necessary in order to permit rehabilitation of the economy.

[remainder of page 10, paragraphs 43-47, withheld]

[page 11]

United Nations access to programme resources

48. It may well prove necessary to amend some of the existing Security Council resolutions to give the United Nations, including the UN agencies and programmes, authority to continue operating under resolution 986 (1995) and subsequent resolutions. They will need the ability to access assets on a continuing basis, particularly in the early stages of their humanitarian intervention. This appears to be an effective method of meeting this need. However, in the short-term, the fundamental position that all assets provided

under the programme are owned by the Government will need to be maintained, in order not to enter into disputes over ownership.

49. As has been stated earlier, it is assumed that almost from the outset of hostilities, exports of oil will cease, at least for some time. As part of the degradation of systems, institutions and infrastructure, oil production will stop and, apart from that held in storage in Ceyhan, in Turkey, which is very limited (less than one million barrels at present), export of oil and, therefore, generation of income available for programme implementation, will halt. Given this circumstance, the ability to access the programme assets, be they in cash or in kind currently in the delivery pipeline, is imperative until alternative sources of revenue are mobilized. Another course of action might be similar to that immediately in the aftermath of the Gulf War, where Member States advanced funds on the understanding that they would be reimbursed eventually.

50. Accordingly, the need to obtain guidance from the Security Council and authorization on the utilization by the United Nations of programme assets in the pipeline of the oil-for-food programme would require urgent consideration.

[paragraphs 51-2 withheld]

Relations with and role of the military

53. The United Nations agencies delivering humanitarian assistance will need to interact with the military authorities on the ground. Such interaction will have to occur regardless of whether the attack is sanctioned by the Security Council or not, although the circumstances will obviously influence the relationship. These contacts should be initiated preferably prior to the start of the conflict and should not be confined to issues related with the coordinates of the humanitarian operational sites.

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54. For years, as part of the debate over the role of the "post-modern armed forces" the military have attempted to carve a niche for themselves in the direct delivery of assistance instead of the previous stance of providing

logistics and engineering support to humanitarian organisations. This is very much an uncharted field that has, a priori, more "cons" than "pros". US/DOD is the most proactive military establishment in the prosecution of such role -- see the extensive utilization of "military/civil affairs" staff in Afghanistan.

[paragraph 55 withheld]

56. There are three matters on which early guidance is required, namely:
- a. The likely 'safe havens' in relation to the security phases, coupled with the need to retain 'critical staff', in locations in the region, but outside Iraq, that are not the designated safe havens.
 - b. The desire to retain an independent presence in Iraq almost at all cost, notwithstanding the fact that phase V may be declared.
 - c. The need to be able to access funds for emergency preparedness, despite the fact that no emergency for Iraq has been declared.
 - d. Although not exclusively humanitarian issue, there is need to give early consideration, regarding the role, if any, of the United Nations regarding the post-conflict administration.
 - e. A last outstanding matter, is the need for the UN to develop, simultaneously with the present Contingency Plan, a Plan "B": What would be the UN's role vis-à-vis Iraq if the conflict is avoided and sanctions are, at the least, suspended.

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TABLE 1 -- HUMANITARIAN SCENARIOS

Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and indirect casualties: 500,000 • 5.21 million high vulnerable 	0.10 1.23	0.20 1.86	0.20 1.29	0.83	Based on population of children under 5, and pregnant and lactating women.
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	(2.02 million severely and moderately wasted under-5 children; 1 million Pregnant and Lactating women requiring supplemental food).					nutritional supplementation required for Pregnant and lactating women, and for anticipated population of acutely malnourished children under 5.
Protection of the most vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,000 persons confined to institutions, comprising orphaned children, the severely handicapped, children in detention, • 21,000 elderly. • 0.15 million unaccompanied minors. • 0.13 existing refugees in Iraq. 					
Demining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major threat from UXO to children under 18. • Refugees at or near borders. • IDPs crossing to the three northern governorates. 					

Shelter and Non-Food Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 460,000 Refugee-Like IDPs in need of shelter and Non Food Items • 970,000 IDPs in need of Non Food Items 					IDPs expected to use buildings and schools for shelter. Need for Non Food Items, especially heaters and cooking facilities.
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<http://www.casi.org.uk/info/undocs/war021210scanned.pdf>

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<http://www.casi.org.uk/info/undocs/war021210notes.html>

Remembering Joseph B. Maier: The Last Member of the Frankfurt School

by
Judith Marcus

In 1999 a Festschrift was published in honor of Joseph B. Maier bearing the highly appropriate title, *Surviving the Twentieth Century: From the Frankfurt School to the Columbia University Faculty Seminars*. The volume was to be a celebration of “The Life of a Scholar,” or to borrow the title of the biography of Hannah Arendt, a good friend of Maier’s, of “The Life of the Mind.” It also turned out to be a reflection on the width and depth of the lifelong interests and scholarship of the man so honored, a tribute to Joseph Maier’s own range of thought and concerns. As one of his friends, Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, Master of Darwin College at Cambridge University, remarked, Maier’s personality, his enthusiasm, generosity of spirit, his sense of what really is important—in life, in education, in politics—included much more than being an academic. Indeed, not only myself as the editor, but all of the contributing scholars felt that the Festschrift constitutes a fraction of the debt we owe to his work, his care for and passionate defense of the free and unhampered cultivation of the mind.

It is by no means easy to give an account of Joe Maier’s personal and professional life, his intellectual outlook and accomplishments in detail in such a short space. Having lived through most of the 20th century, one wonders whether or not Maier had ever thought of the oft-quoted Chinese curse: “May you live in interesting times.” Indeed, those of us who knew Joe Maier well were aware that he was anything but a conventional sociologist.

Born in 1911, Joe Maier was raised and schooled in Leipzig, Germany. Although the son of an Orthodox Rabbi (albeit with a Ph.D.), his childhood friends called him a “German Jew,” which implied a certain degree of assimilation and acquisition of the German *Bildung*. Leipzig was an intellectual and cultural center with its famous University, the *Gewandhaus* with its noted orchestra, as well as the Thomas-Kirche with its Bach tradition. It was a place of divergent traditions and backgrounds which were clearly mirrored in the trends of the Jewish community’s there. On account of his parents moving to

Dresden, Maier switched from the Jewish Parochial School to a German Gymnasium with its high scholastic demands and was soon on his way to an academic career. One of his schoolmates described the imprint of German culture on their young minds as follows: there was “the Kantian philosophical idealism, the neo-Kantianism of Herman Cohen, Hegel’s dialectic scheme, and *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx.” Still toward the end of his life when the talk turned to the concept of *Bildung*, Maier displayed a depth of feeling tinged with sadness. Whenever I discuss this matter with Americans, I need to explain what the concept means and am then more often than not put on the defensive. As George L. Mosse defined it, *Bildung* is a post-emancipatory notion that includes character formation, moral education, the primacy of (high) culture, and a belief in the potential of humanity. Joe Maier called this “A Precious Legacy,” in a 1971 essay of the same title which began by saying:

Besitz and *Bildung* defined the spirit of modern German Jewry. With some important modifications, to be sure, they may be said to define the legacy of German Jews here and now. Scion of a long line of rabbinical families, I believe as firmly as I did in September 1933, when I escaped from Nazi Germany, in the synthesis of Western Judaism, the proposition that Western civilization owes as much to its Jewish heritage as the emancipation of the Jews owes to the blessings of Western civilization.

Joe Maier’s reference to his escape from Nazi Germany to the United States is a lead-in to the second stage of his long life. While parts of his immediate family had been in America since the mid-1920s, and the rest since 1930, he himself immigrated only after Hitler’s ascent to power in January 1933, interrupting his studies in philosophy, literature and sociology at the University of Leipzig. In a 1993 interview, Maier confessed that he’d never felt quite right about emigrating but since he was a “socialist, and belonged to a socialist students’ group,” he was afraid that he’d be caught with Marxist literature. After he “saw so many people disappear,” he wrote to his parents asking them to send him a boat ticket.

He continued his studies at Columbia University where he earned his M.A. in 1934 and his Ph.D. in 1939 with a dissertation, *On Hegel’s Critique of Kant* that

was subsequently published by Columbia University Press in 1966.

But around 1935, there came a crucial point in his personal and professional life when, as a member of the small German-Jewish Club of New York, he met a young woman named Alice, who was the personal secretary to Max Horkheimer, formerly Director of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, which was, at the time, affiliated with Columbia University. Through her mediation he met Horkheimer and as he said, "it was love at first sight," intellectually, politically, and culturally. The world that they shared was what Joe referred to in his speech at the unveiling of the Heinrich Heine Monument in the Bronx, namely, that it was the refugees, the German-Jewish immigrants who were the real, genuine heirs of German philosophy and literature, that wonderful part of humanity which was now in danger of being destroyed by the Nazis. This view provided his linkage to the Frankfurt School. It was a fitting continuance that Joe married Alice a year later with Horkheimer's blessings.

As a Research Assistant at the Institute, Maier found many teachers of highly diverse interests and expertise. He was allowed to attend all of their meetings, partook in their discussions and assisted in their research. So it came that through his association with Theodor Adorno he learned all he knew about music and musicology; and from Frederick Pollock all that was to be learned about economics and the stock market; Henryk Grossman helped to deepen his knowledge of Marx, and the legal and political theory aspects were imparted by Franz Neumann and Otto Kirchheimer. Maier assisted Erich Fromm in the coding of the empirical survey material collected in Germany on the political attitudes of the German working class before Hitler's takeover of Germany, later used in Fromm's famous book, *Escape from Freedom*. He did work for Herbert Marcuse whose expertise was in intellectual history and theory and whose first American book, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, was then in the making. And then there was Leo Lowenthal, whose field was sociology of literature and whose *Image of Man* is still widely used today.

In 1939, he became Research Assistant of the Princeton Radio Project and from 1940 to 1943 he was an Assistant Editor of the German-Jewish weekly, *Aufbau*. It was there that his ties with Hannah Arendt grew stronger. They wrote parallel columns in *Aufbau* (she in German, Joe in English) in the cause of establishing a Jewish Army. This was Joe's first attempt at active political involvement. Besides writing a column called "The Watchman," Joe accompanied Arendt to meetings of an organization called the Committee for a Jewish Army but later

formed their own group. After the disastrous Biltmore Conference, Joe and Arendt turned away from what they called “political Zionism.”

After the War, Maier did voluntary service in Germany and participated in the Nuremberg Trials ending up as Chief of the Analysis section of the Interrogation Division. Based on the examined documents, interrogation transcripts, and protocols, the Division evaluated the involvement of war criminals in the commission or execution of crimes, ranging from Göring’s role in the *Endlösung*, the “final solution of the Jewish Question,” or some of the German military leaders’ alleged orders to shoot allied POWs, to the German industrialists’ role in supplying, for example, poison gas to Auschwitz. I personally heard Joe recount his own interrogation of Göring or Rudolf Hess, remembering their answers—or in some cases, their silence—as if it were yesterday.

His participation and the ensuing reports were, no doubt, immensely useful to the prosecution, including Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson. Maier witnessed Rudolf Höss, the Commandant of Auschwitz, make out a note to him which began: “Ich erkläre,” I declare, and affirming that “during my tenure in office as Commandant of Auschwitz Concentration Camp, 2 million Jews were put to death by gassing and one half million by other means.” He remarked how Hess defied classification. He appeared as a “ghastly walking corpse,” claiming amnesia and giving the same answer, “I am sorry, I don’t remember.” The masquerade of amnesia having ended, Maier recalled how Hess’s true feelings surfaced in claiming that “Hitler was the greatest son the German people produced” (never mind that he didn’t even come from Germany), and was proud of the fact that he had helped Hitler with his *Mein Kampf*.

These must have been extremely trying, painful experience but it also provided a sense of satisfaction in having participated in the final reckoning. On a much more positive level, he also found ways to help: at the request of Hannah Arendt, he looked up her old teacher, the philosopher Karl Jaspers who became one of his regular food parcel recipients, as did Marianna Weber, the widow of Max Weber, as well as many others.

Once his duties in Germany concluded, Joe entered the American academic scene in 1947 joining the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University and helped to build up the Department at Rutgers-Newark; he became its chair for

two decades until his retirement in 1980. His contribution to sociology, though, went further. When the emerging West German democracy was struggling with establishing sociology as a discipline at its universities, Maier went there in 1953 as a "Visiting U.S. Specialist of the Department of State," visiting scores of universities, participating in discussions, delivering lectures on American sociology, theory and research and participating in conferences.

Maier remained true to his "roots" in another respect: like his teachers and friends at the Institute, he retained and practiced his interdisciplinary and interdepartmental inclinations. He also maintained and acted upon his deep concern for things German and Jewish. His interdisciplinary inclinations led him to become an active participant of the weekly get-togethers of Frank Tannenbaum, the doyen of American Latin Americanists, and originator of the University Seminars at Columbia. He also became a highly visible and active member of many others, such as "Studies in Religion," "18th Century European Culture," "Latin America" and "Cultural Pluralism." Since 1973, he chaired the Seminar "On Contents and Methods of the Social Sciences," with scholars of several disciplines addressing central issues, with ensuing publications.

Maier's activities and concerns in no way diminished after his retirement; if anything, they increased and branched out. He joined his old friend and colleague, Werner Cahnman, in establishing an organization for the "Preservation of Jewish Cultural Monuments in Europe," later called the "Rashi Association," chartered in 1978 and still active today. Since 1980, he was the President of the Association working tirelessly for many projects many of which have come to fruition such as the establishment and financial support of a "Registry of Art-historically Relevant Judaica" at the Martin Buber Institute of the University of Cologne, and, more significantly, the establishment of the Institute of Judaic Studies at the University of Munich. Joe Maier's last wish was to see the publication of Werner Cahnman's manuscript "Jews and Gentiles: A Social History of their Relation." It will be realized in 2003 and the volume will be dedicated to the memory of Joseph B. Maier.

An Afternoon with Carmen Francesca Banciu

by
Elena Mancini

Sitting comfortably on caramel colored leather couch in her Berlin Mitte high-rise on a hot and lazy July afternoon, Carmen Francesca Banciu speaks candidly of her fondness for Berlin, the city she has made her home since late 1990. When asked to pinpoint what it is about Berlin that is so special to her, she cites her friends, the vibrant cultural scene but most of all the fact that she is living in a place that she finds geopolitically fascinating. For Banciu, Berlin represents for her a bridge between East and West and more than just that it is a place that is ever-evolving and continuously reinventing itself. Intermittently, she excuses herself to check on the giggles coming from the kitchen where her children Cantimier (20) and Meda (15) are doing their homework and to make sure her frisky cats, Juri and Pablo, are not wreaking too much havoc.

Before sitting down again, she reaches over to give me a bowl filled with sweet, ripe yellow and red peaches and our conversation resumes. We touch on a number of interesting and unrelated topics: Romania, immigration, language, xenophobia, censorship and domestic responsibilities—Banciu is the sole breadwinner and the one primarily in charge of domestic duties in her household. Having made my nervousness about the time obvious—trying to discreet about glancing at my notes and my watch, Banciu gently reassured me that no clock-watching was required—she had nothing planned for the rest of the afternoon. And so we both sat back and allowed the conversation to grow and unravel at a natural pace and picked up a number of interesting and impromptu topics and family anecdotes along the way. For instance, I learned how the boisterous Pablo, her formerly vagrant cat got his name. Pablo was brought home by Meda, the youngest of the Banciu children on the 25th of October, Banciu's birthday, and that of Picasso as well. The children found the intersection of dates and fates only fitting—not to mention an apt palliative for Banciu who was initially leery about adopting yet another pet at first, that the proud cat bear the name of the great painter.

If you buy into the notion at all that the outer is a manifestation of the inner, then Banciu's warm and jovial surroundings clearly suggest that she enjoys a sense of rooted contentment in Berlin. But you don't need to dig very deeply to figure that out, Banciu is very open and clear about how she feels about living in Berlin. The radiance and *joie de vivre* that she exudes and the animated way in which she speaks about her life in Berlin clears up any doubt whatsoever on the topic. And if you're still not convinced about that, her latest book says it best.

Berlin is the subject of her latest novel, *Berlin ist mein Paris (Berlin Is My Paris)* published by Ullstein Verlag in early 2002. It is a collection of personal anecdotes, vignettes and short stories that hone in on her impressions and experiences of Berlin. Light-hearted and poetic, the title of this work reflects an important turn in Banciu's biography: Despite her original plan to move to Paris, the natural destination of generations of budding artists, she decided to remain in Berlin, the first city she traveled to after the collapse of the Communist Block. Her choice, Banciu claims, is greatly due to her appreciation of Berlin's strategic geopolitical placement—a crossroads between East and West, a European city par excellence. She relates that her attraction to this knot between East and West also explains her choice of writing places. She writes regularly in Caffè Sale e Tabacchi, a sleek and eclectically decorated Italian Restaurant located near Check Point Charlie—the old border control between East and West Berlin. In such a place, Banciu claims, stories write themselves.

Carmen Francesca Banciu was born on October 25th, 1955 in Lipova, Romania. She lived in Gutenbrun Lipova, Timisora and Arad. After completing her secondary school degree in Arad in 1980, she studied church painting and international trade. Banciu began writing at a very young age. As a child and a teenager she wrote mainly for herself and did not even contemplate becoming a writer. In her early twenties, she began taking her writing more and more seriously. In 1982, she won the Literature Prize of the Luceafărul magazine in Bucharest. In 1984, she won the Manual de Intrebări for a work in prose. In 1985, she won the International Short Story Prize of the city of Arnsberg in Germany for her short story on *Das strahlende Ghetto (The Sparkling Ghetto)*. This achievement prompted a publication ban in Romania. In Germany she published *Fenster in Flammen (Windows in Flames)* (1992) a collection of short stories with political content, *Filuteks Handbuch der Fragen (Filutek's Handbook of Questions)* (1995) in 1998

Carmen Francesca Banciu

Vaterflucht (Flight from Father), in 2000 *Ein Land voller Helden (A Country Full of Heroes)* and most recently *Berlin ist mein Paris (Berlin is My Paris)*.

Carmen Francesca Banciu continues to live and write in Berlin with her three children Marijuana (21), Cantemir (20) and Meda (15) and her cats Juri and Pablo. In addition to writing, she also works as a free-lance editor and commentator for various news media and teaches a number of seminars on creative writing throughout the year in different European cities.

Vaterflucht (Flight from Father) Banciu's autobiographical novel appeared in the spring of 1998. It was the first novelistic debut in the German language. Here the narrator comes to terms with her painful and conflict-ridden childhood. The first person narrator recounts growing up in an oppressive state that constantly played an intrusive role in her life and her personal struggle for individuality and self-expression against the pressures of being a daughter of a Communist party functionary, strict and uncompromising in his adherence to the party line, and an exemplary self-abnegating Communist woman. In a tone that is not the least bit sentimental, Banciu soberly and sometimes bitterly exposes the self-denial and emotional estrangement that the keen desires for self-expression and individuality in this type of society can entail. This is also evident from the Banciu's style. Sentences and verb phrases are clipped ending abruptly and at times seemingly arbitrarily. A cursory look at her writing gives the impression that punctuation is haphazard, but further reading gives way to the fact that combined with the repetition and brief and sober commentary that is slipped in, it has a highly subversive quality.

Vaterflucht has received enthusiastic critical acclaim in Germany and excerpts from the novel have appeared in *Les Temps Modernes* in France. A Romanian translation of the work has not yet been carried out, but Banciu has given readings of it in Romania.

My English translation of the first few chapters of *Vaterflucht (Flight from Father)* are presented here as well as an interview I conducted with Carmen Francesca Banciu on writing, Romania and Berlin.

Interview with Carmen Francesca Banciu

Conducted by
Elena Mancini

How have Romania and its former Communist regime influenced your life and your writing? I know that this is not a question that can easily be answered. One could write a book about this, as you have in your 1998 novel Vaterflucht (Flight from Father). But perhaps you can mention two or three principle aspects?

There is a chapter in my book *Ein Land voller Helden (A Land Full of Heroes)* in which a character asks why we are born in a particular place. Of course my life would have been different if I had been born in the Federal Republic of Germany or in the U.S. Although I believe that we each carry a seed within ourselves which would have developed under any sort of circumstances; that in a different society, one would have chosen to rebel against different things, but would have nonetheless had within him or herself the potential to rebel. The details would have been different but not the basic form. Because there are reasons for our existence, regardless of what one ultimately chooses to do with them.

Romania has shaped my writing and colored it politically even if I have never written political literature. I have integrated politics in[to] my life. And I continue to do so today. Only politics is no longer the measure of all things. It is only one of the steps in discovering the world, on the way to freedom.

Which aspects of Romanian culture have been particularly significant in shaping you as an individual?

I believe socialism as ideology and *social realism* in art has shaped me in that I developed an inner resistance to it, allowed me to sharpen my critical sense and has taught me to look behind the scenes. I learned how to see through the attempts to manipulate and how to protect myself against them at a very young age. I learned to do what I wanted and to write what I wanted.

Another important marking is the surrealist component to realism. Nothing is as surrealist as realism. And that gives one the feeling of power and I

mean this as the opposite as powerlessness. It gives one the feeling of freedom.

What would you say are the most salient aspects of the Romanian national character? What are some of the traits you are most fond of? Are there certain traits that you deem worthy of criticism?

If I were to name some important characteristics of the Romanian people, then it would be a sense of disrespect toward everything that is established. But also a sense of fatalism toward every type of catastrophe, be they natural catastrophes or caused by history. On the first day of the devastating earthquake in Bucharest in March 1977, the jokes were already being made. And one had already taken pleasure in mocking everyone and everything.

The art of improvisation is an important quality that contains both aspects. The advantage of this is the creative, the playful, the fantastic, the lively and the lesser advantageous aspect is the sloppiness.

Order is not my weakness. But in the meantime since I no longer believe in needing to swim against the current, I know that order can be constructive and I seek to teach this to my subconscious as well.

Which writers have shaped you as a writer?

I read a lot already as a child—everything that fell into my hands. We had a considerably large library at home. And even though a strict control governed our society and our home, and my mother wanted to know the most intimate details about my life, reading represented absolute freedom for me. My parents had much respect for the printed word. For books. The only things they didn't try to censure for me were my books. I read Maupassant, Casanova, Boccaccio, *1001 Nights* and *Dangerous Liaisons* and a lot of trash in addition to a great deal of wonderful literature at a very early age. I read Proust at fourteen or fifteen during summer vacation. This freedom shaped me tremendously. It was essential and rescued me later. Since I was not allowed to leave my country and travel, but I was allowed to travel the world through books. And the world was endless. I longed to experience it. I had been preparing for it. By reading. And it never got boring. Just the opposite. I had the feeling that my thirst could never be quenched. Because I wanted to have a taste from every source. And for that one life is just not enough. This feeling is still with me today.

I have learned a great deal from the Russians, from Dostoyevski, Turgeniev, Tolstoy, Chekov, Gogol, George Sand, Rousseau, Madame de Stael, Proust, Flaubert, Beauvoir, Dumas, and Gelu Naum. Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, a great deal from the Italians like Giorgio Bassani, Moravia; from the South Americans with their magical realism, from Ernesto Sabato, Cortazar, Llossa, Juan Rulfo, from whom have I not learned? From Faulkner, Steinbeck and Salinger, Truman Capote, Updike, from them I have learned how one writes stories, and how one expresses oneself in a brief and forceful manner.

How was writing different for women in Communist Romania?

There was also in Romania a debate about so-called “Women’s Literature.” We have always defended ourselves against it because it seemed like an attempt to ghettoize us a second time and to render us dependent, instead of the opposite. It was a concept that our male counterparts introduced. They also thought that women had never written a valuable literature. These theories are known all over the world. But in socialist regimes these are a bit worse, because it is not about the differences between men and women or about women and the role of their identity as such in literature, and how one can express that in literature, rather about subordination and mistreatment. Women’s literature represented a minority literature that possessed no depth and no real meaning. At best women were acknowledged for showing some talent in poetry. And this was valid only for women in their younger years. It was believed that this talent was lost with age. When a critic wanted to acknowledge a female writer, he would claim that she wrote like a man. If she treated themes that dealt with her female identity, then she would be deemed as less worthy and unimportant to great literature. The top tens were made up of men who every now and then gave a cookie in the form of a prize or a good review to a female writer whom they claimed wrote like a man.

In Vaterflucht (Flight from Father) you do not only come to terms with your childhood but also with Romania’s history. How much is this still a theme for you? Did dealing with these issues in your writing allow you to come closer to reconciliation with your country?

Vaterflucht is a novel that cannot only be read on a political level. It is a poetic exploration about authority, cruelty and force and at the same time it is about an important moment in history. It is about an until now failed

human experiment—namely the myth of the new human, of a new era, and to write about it from the perspective of an insider. In this sense the book is also a contribution toward an understanding between two (politically opposed) worlds on human and artistic planes. My intention was to write about tyranny and authority in the guise of the physical father, who is simultaneously an exponent of the political class and identifies himself with the system. About the *Überfather*, the father as an oppressive power and political authority. And about the power of resistance. About being brought up in a dictatorship. I did not want to point fingers, rather I wanted to understand and render understandable. This process is not yet over. It is not only limited to Romania. But Romania is the country I know the best and that serves as a stage for me. Now I live in Germany—a country that is also marked by dictatorships. Hence, I believe that it is the right place for me to work on my understanding of this dynamic as it is useful for me to grasp what is developing in places with similar backgrounds.

Berlin was the first city who traveled to after the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, in spite of your original wish to move to Paris. This is the topic of your recently published autobiographical collection of short stories on Berlin, Berlin ist mein Paris (Berlin is My Paris). And now you are living here over ten years. What does Berlin represent for you?

Berlin is an experiment in which I would like to participate. It is a metaphor. A metaphor in order to understand the division of the world and its entire brutality. Checkpoint Charlie is the place that expresses and represents this notion best.

Berlin is the essence of the notion that East and West together can produce something new. The creation of a new world. Berlin is Paris and Bucharest in one and something more. Something unique. Paris is the eternal city. Bucharest is a city in transition. And Berlin is just right. It has to unite two pasts. A big duty that will effect everyone. Whether one likes it or not the fall of the wall has changed the whole world. It began in Berlin. Berlin is an exemplary city. What happens here will affect the whole world.

What does writing in the present feel to you as a Romanian woman living in Berlin for over eleven years?

I view my presence in Berlin as a privilege. It is a privilege to decide for oneself where one wants to live and how one wants to live. What one lives

for. And when one has lived in a dictatorship, one knows how to appreciate that. Twelve years before that would have been unthinkable. But freedom is also not something that can be taken for granted anywhere in the world. Not even here in the West. Freedom is a concept that I understand a little bit better every day. I get closer to it a little more each day and take it in quantities in which I can manage. It is the challenge of our age. And I feel solidarity in this with my contemporaries throughout the world.

Do you feel literary affinities with any of the former GDR writers?

I must admit that I feel closer to authors like Emime Sevgi Özdamar with her wonderful novel *Die Brücke vom goldenen Horn (The Bridge from the Golden Horn)*, or Yoko Tawada, Theresia Mora or Feridun Zaimoglu who occupies herself with the language of second generation Turkish immigrants. At the moment I have far greater affinities with authors who place language at the center of their writing and with Emime Özdamar's attempt to present her own biography in a historical European context. I must admit that I have not particularly preoccupied myself with GDR literature. I have always been interested in authors and cultures that were not accessible to me outside of the world of books. I wanted to learn about things I knew nothing about and that did not verify already familiar experiences. Only now do the GDR authors interest me. Now there is room for experiences that are similar to mine and in retrospect I find it also important and interesting to read these authors.

There are some authors that I had already read in Romania: Uwe Johnson, Stefan Heym, Christa Wolf, Reiner Kirsch are among them. There are also some with which I have difficulties with such as Hermann Kant.

To what extent would you say that the themes are similar? What about the writing style. Would you in similar fashion to many GDR writers, also speak of an inner censor playing a role in your own writing?

In the Romanian version of Communism there was a set of words that were banned or prohibited. The press and the books were supposed to be a mirror of society, but also an example. The idea was not necessarily to report in a fashion that was faithful to reality or to transform reality into art, but rather to create models. One can say they were wishful examples. Positive thinking also creates wishful images that are supposed to become reality just because one believes in them. Only that with Communism one was surely punished

when one did not believe in them. And it was not left up to the individual to choose the wishful images one would believe in and would use for orientation of the self.

Neither the press nor books were permitted to make allusions to the problems in society, let alone exercising open critique toward the system. Words like gray would be struck out of a text. Life in such a society was only allowed to be described by bright, lively colors. This influenced the society to great extent and our censors followed each one of us in our everyday lives—even in our sleep. Communication became more and more trying and coded. A metalanguage was developed. That spurred the imagination—ambiguity, metaphors and illustrative vividness belonged to our day to day. Jokes crowned our everyday expressions. Surreal and fantastic literature functioned as coded artistic conduits into reality. And every baker read elevated literature and literary journals and stood in line to buy books. Because there was nothing to be read in the newspapers. Instead there was a lot to read between the lines in the countless weekly papers and in the literary magazines that appeared printed in massive copies and in some books.

This way of living, of thinking plays an enormous role in shaping one's life. I refuse for myself personally to accept any type of inner censor. I have always written what I wanted to write. In any case with the usual consequences. Five years of publication ban. It's like with the saying: *Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger*. In any case the negative experiences should have a time limit. Otherwise no one ever comes to the pleasurable realization of how much stronger one has become. At the very least, future generations will be able to confirm this.

How is your novel Vaterflucht perceived in Romania? How did critics receive it?

Vaterflucht is my first novel written directly in German. For this reason there is still no Romanian translation of it. Only a few chapters of it have been translated, which I have presented at a reading at the Goethe Institut in Bucharest. In spite of this only a few reactions in the press were positive. My first version of the novel *Ein Land voller Helden (A Land Full of Heroes)*, which I originally wrote in Romanian and published under the title *A Day Without a President* drew more reactions. This book was very well received and was in the literary bestseller lists and is presently sold out.

What do you make of the literature that is coming out of contemporary Romania?

At the moment there are quite a few authors that are very interesting and that are consciously or unconsciously taking part in the process of liberating the language. Many of them are trying to come to terms with the past. And some of them are simply cultivating the pleasure of language and engaging in unbridled recounting. And rightfully so. One should be able to fully enjoy the freedom and explore the inexhaustible wealth that language offers. To relearn how to play. But this is once again a general contemporary theme. Because even Western society imposes its own restrictions and practices censorship and self-censorship for different reasons and has forgotten the qualities of being carefree and playful. Sometimes these qualities are mistakenly exchanged with fun.

But fun, as it is understood here, and playfulness are two different things. *Homo ludens* is the type of person that takes pleasure in provoking and pushing the world forward. The type of person that only wants to have fun is bored, tends toward depression and needs entertainment and distractions around the clock otherwise he does not know what to do with himself.

What themes are of particular interest for Carmen Francesca Banciu, the writer and the woman?

In my next books, my trilogy, I would like to create characters whose life stories have implicitly been touched by the important themes of the old and new centuries and that reflect upon this: breaks and separations war, revolution, immigration and migration, the conflicts between East and West and the collapse of the systems, historical transformations and the attempt to save the old world and to somehow integrate it into the new world—Europe. To integrate my country and my work in a European context. Another interest of mine is to write about things that have not received very much literary attention—such as pregnancy and the period of gestation and the moment of delivery. Much has already been written about the Oedipus Complex. Far less however has been written about matricide and the heroism of female destinies. It is my observation that women in difficult situations always continue to interest, move and find understanding in a European context and in the literature from around the world.

Fiction

Flight from Father

by
Carmen Francesca Banciu

1

My father is a small, old man with glass balls in his eye sockets. At least he was the last time I saw him—and that's already a while ago, something like seven years ago—since then his eyes have gotten bluer and glassier and his mouth has become larger. And the silver in his hair has grown shinier. The color of his skin is healthier. My father believes in the future. My father lives in Romania and believes in the future of socialism. To carry my heavy suitcases—fully packed with stuff I brought back for him from the West—gives him strength.

My father doesn't believe in the West. The West with its profligate prosperity is a fiction to him. A fiction that no one will admit to when it proves itself as such. So that no one will laugh at them when it's gone. For this reason my father carries the suitcases with enormous strength and refuses to take a taxi. I have to fall into line. Because I've just arrived and still have no Romanian money. It's still early to change. I have to fall into line. After a twenty-four hour train ride, I schlep myself behind my father like a drunken hound. I'm the kid again. The good one. The one who will rebel soon.

2

He's standing by the station wearing his old leather coat and his Kyrgysian astrakhan cap waiting for me. His lips like the blades of a scissor.

His lips were always cutting. Unsparing: You are not worth anything. Nothing will ever come of you. And no one will marry you. For years I have heard these phrases. For years I have carried the scissor wounds within me. The deep scars of this unrelenting way of raising someone to perfection. You

are not allowed to make any mistakes, my father would take great pains to tell me. And I have always grasped very soon what was expected of me.

We were an exemplary family. I was proud of that. I was proud of every burden that I could share with my parents. I had to be self-confident, self-critical and responsible. To be able to influence others. So that the world would become a better place.

La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années.

We lived in a settlement of the Partidul Comunist Român Im in “Block PCR.” That’s what our four story apartment house was called. It was the first highrise in our little city. A modern building with running water and bath for the most modern strata of the country. And we belonged to it.

All of the adult inhabitants of the PCR-Block were actively engaged in the well-being of the country. No, they fought for it. In the class struggle. They were also fighters for the well being of the Motherland and the efflorescence of the Communist Party. All fathers and many mothers in the building were party functionaries. Propagandists. I had the unspeakable fortune to have two politically conscious fighters in my own family.

We were an exemplary family. And belonged to one of the largest. To one tribe. The tribe of the PCR people.

Even for the children of our tribe I had to be a role model. Mother and Father expected it of me. And I could not disappoint them. Father, among other things, had taken it upon himself to produce the new human in his own family. I had more duties than the other children. My consciousness. My sense of responsibility had to be greater than that of the others. No childish excuses. No tricks. No playfulness. I can’t remember ever being forgiven for a mistake.

I never had time. I always had to do something. Something useful. Something that would advance me. Something that would help others too. My time had already been strictly planned since my childhood. Time to play was seldom. I had to struggle for the permission to be able to be with people my age. Many a time crowds of children stood in front of my door, wanting to free me from my chores. They begged my parents insistently. Tried to convince my mother. Now and again she would give in. With a reproachful

look. I knew exactly what it meant. Which lectures I would get to hear afterwards. About the regrettably stupid way I would waste my time. About how regrettable my views on life were. Because you lie in the bed you make. And my parents would sacrifice themselves for me. So that I would have a better life than they did. Because no one had sacrificed themselves so for them. They had to rely on their own strength to make something of themselves. And no one would have spent so much as a penny on them so that they could learn something. So they could have an education. With it.

My father always told me that. As far as Mother is concerned, she had been to a boarding school. A private school for well brought up daughters.

Piano. Violin. I got private ballet instruction. Even though ballet counted as the final relic of a petite bourgeois education. This was made up for with gymnastic training.

For this reason I hate gymnastics. And every form of athletic instruction.

Piano. Violin. Ballet. Gymnastics. Russian. French. English. Any type of lessons, I always had them. Whereas my friend Juliana was allowed to push her doll stroller here and there blithely.

I always enjoyed playing the piano. At least in the beginning. The small, old, deaf, fat man with the grunt pink ears, who always tapped on my fingers drove it out of me. He was supposed to be my piano teacher. Mother knew him from before. As she still received piano lessons. I didn't believe that this was Mother's way of getting revenge. It was her own stubborn way of conveying an image of life to me. I was supposed to learn to stand above things. In a certain sense I was also able to succeed at this. Because I still like playing the piano today.

With the violin it went downhill pretty early with Bach. When my teacher grabbed my sprouting breasts. And I came home shaking. Without my shoes. I'll give you a lion! He shouted after me. I'll give you more. Even more.

My parents had to see to it that an education was not achieved at any price. And found that one had to be very careful. So that the remnants of the former regime did not poison the children of the new era. In our presence the reactionary forces kept themselves hidden. And they had to be exposed immediately. Everyone had to contribute to that. We had to get better at

being careful. And what good fortune that we had managed to succeed at it this time!

Piano. Violin. Ballet.

Mother wanted me to take small steps. To eat taking small bites. To learn to move softly and elegantly. I also enjoyed ballet lessons. But suddenly I was no longer allowed to go. I would have gladly danced my whole life long. Expressed my happiness through dance. To express oneself. To dance. To lose oneself and forget. And to find oneself again. But that was not the point of it. Mother was accused of acting unpolitically. Father was furious. Horrified. Mother admitted to having made a mistake.

I was already writing back then. No one had to know. No one could take that away from me.

I always had some type of lessons. While Juliana played with her doll stroller. And the others played *••ri-ora•e-mun•i-i-ape* or dodge ball. And we had made the rules so strict that by every ball switch we had to kiss each other. As a rule. And not out of sheer pleasure.

I had no time for kissing. I still had to take care of my pets. I always owned some sort of pet. So that I would not be so all alone. And so that I could also learn to be responsible for others. This responsibility could not kill my love for animals. I felt connected with their fate. I always owned a pet. And somehow it always turned out to be a catastrophe. My pigeon drowned in a hot oil tank in our courtyard. The rabbit wound up in the frying pan. The squirrels ate homemade soap. My tomcat got his testicles poked on a barbed wire fence. The fish. Their fat white bellies facing upwards. The smell of death lay over my childhood.

Piano. English. Violin.

Sometimes I stole some time. Forgot the piano lesson. I went down the Marosch to go fishing with the other children. I knew the gravity of my sin this was and what consequences would await me. The reddish swollen traces on the cheeks. The dark blue streaks on my bottom. I'd been able to guess Mother's reaction for some time now. Nevertheless I took my chances over and over again.

Lies were always complicated. In truth, I couldn't really afford to lie. Whenever Mother asked what I had done the whole day long, I could leave some stuff out, simply by not mentioning it. But when she asked expressly, if and when, then I had to admit to everything. And bring the strap. I would rebel in my own way. And brought the strap. Gave it to her without hesitating. Mother extended the strap. Struck with an ever-increasing fury. You will not shed a single tear. No. I didn't cry. I knew that crying was a sign of weakness.

Sometimes I stole some time for myself. My parents worked a lot, were seldom at home. Father least of all. They gave me chores. One of them was to work very hard at school. Every one expected me to be the best and to receive the first prize every year.

You're good for nothing, nothing will come of you. And no one on this earth will ever marry you. My father intended to motivate me.

My parents worked very hard. Father's life consisted exclusively of work. Mother often did overtime. As the director of the Communist Women's Organization she had to run around to and from the different villages all day long. With dusty boots. A real Natasha. For a short while we had domestic help. A rosy Swabian granny from Banat. I don't know if Father wanted to save again. Or if it was the Party that judged it to be human beings exploiting other human beings. In any case, I was already alone at age eight. I had to take care of myself. Clean the apartment. Keep things in order. Warm up my food. And cook for myself when need called for it. They left me with a shopping list and cooking recipes. I had to finish my homework. To go to extracurricular lessons. I was not allowed to have fears about being alone.

I was one of the first latch-key kids in our city. One of the first latch-key kids in our society. With the key on a string around my neck, I would be happy to spend some time at our neighbors. With their kids. While I was doing that I would listen attentively to hear if my parents were coming back. And would quickly sneak into our apartment before they got back.

I wasn't allowed to be afraid to be alone. I was afraid of being afraid. Hoped that people would not be able to see that about me.

Before my parents were due to come home, I would always look out the window. I wanted to have everything ready. I would pose. I hated being

surprised by them. Most of the time it wasn't good. When they were late, I would always look at the clock over and over again. At my list. If everything had been done. Ran from the door to the window. And from the window to the balcony. Took something from here and set it there. Organized this or the other thing. Practiced piano. I wanted them to catch me doing something useful. Each time, I never knew what they would find undone. I would check the kitchen. The bathroom. I would get increasingly nervous. I would start to shake. Sometimes they would delay by a day. Then they would finally come, and I had forgotten to empty out the garbage. I would go get the strap. Order had to prevail. As well as discipline. One had to be able to rely on his comrades in every situation.

I wanted my parents to like me. No. I was convinced of the importance of becoming a new human. All of the adults in our house were preoccupied with this. I was always considered to be a wonder child. My father liked to hear this. I was following his footsteps. It wasn't like having a son. But still.

In our tribe. No, in fact, in our whole city, all eyes were pointing toward me. Everyone took care to tell me so. I couldn't afford to disappoint all of these people. I grew up accordingly. My opinions were childish, but "healthy." I was even allowed to correspond with people in foreign countries. I had a friend in the Soviet Republic of Moldavia, Svetlana Vrabie, which means sparrow in Romanian. Svetlana Sparrow. A Russian-Romanian name construction. She conformed to all that Moldavia represented. I wrote to her in Romanian but in Cyrillic script. I also wrote Moldavian. Moldavian was a Russian invention. The war had been over for some time now. In the meantime the Party allowed it. And the Motherland demanded it. Patriotism should flicker in us too now. Next to internationalism. And without failing to show respect to the big brother in all things, the New Generation should not forget that Moldavia is Romanian soil. Even if on a long term loan. They tried to drum this into us, without straining our relations to the Soviet Union.

I had no idea that it had been a political decision to allow me to correspond with people from foreign countries.

My other pen-pal was from France. The Party allowed the western enemy to have a look at our reality. To be exposed to a healthy image of it. And everyone had to contribute his or her efforts to this end. I wasn't aware of my responsibility.

Our PCR-Block was the first high-rise on the Marosch. Over and over again we, the kids, would be told how the Marosch, the Mures, was the river that separated the seven forts from Banat. How even our city was separated by the Marosch. Maybe there was a reason for that. Everything had to have a possible reason. A political one.

Before, our neighborhood belonged to the multiethnic state of Kakanien. And today it is marked by borders. An area that borders with Hungary. A short distance from Voivodina, the Serbian Banat. A multicultural area with many “*nationalități conlocuitoare*.” A lively area neighborhood with mixed blood.

Shortly after our house got modernized, the residential block MFA next door got built, the “*Ministerul Forțelor Armate*.” An army settlement. A great rivalry existed between us kids from the PCR-Block and those from the MFA. Power struggles. We waged wars. Who’s stronger, the Party or the army. Brotherhood was seldom possible.

It wasn’t till later that I understood that the Communists had come to power during the war with the help of the king and had substituted a military dictatorship. The military dictatorship of Marshall Antonescu. The king called upon the patriotic duty of the Communists and removed them from the illegitimacy of Soviet exile, in order to save Romania. The same Communists, not more than a handful, who stood under the protection of the king, afterwards forced the king to abdicate.

Then these comrades brought the Russians to Romania. They brought the powerful, indomitable Red Army with its tanks. That were supposed to free Romania. In the end there was war.

Romania was freed. And cleansed of Romanians. Everyone became Russian. They spoke Russian. Read Russian. The bookstores and the publishers were called “The Russian Book.” Overnight Romania became a Slavic country. With a Slavic past. History was written anew. One discovered that Romanian was a Slavic language. So that everything would have its proper order, new letters of the alphabet were invented and introduced into the language. The orthography was changed. The spelling of Romania’s name was changed. So that as little as possible would remind one of Romania’s roots. The

introduction of the Russian alphabet was successful only in the part of Moldavia that was annexed to the Soviet Union after the war.

Who was stronger. PCR or MFA. This question was difficult for us kids to answer. Because with time the settlement of the MFA people grew larger and changed its name. The city's security forces that belonged to the internal ministry also moved into the city.

The security forces and the army were in the service of the Party. The Party served the ideology. And the ideology was supposed to serve the Motherland. The people. The coronation of creation. That supposedly was stronger than nature.

Or was it otherwise. Because one cannot imagine what kind of fights the two residential blocks drove us kids to. The army was in the service of the Motherland. And the security forces in the service of the Party. And the Party in the service of the ideology.

Or was it.

Man was in fact stronger than nature. Indestructible. And was supposed to outlive everything.

La valeur n'attend pas le noble des années. That virtue did not depend on age was a known fact to all of us kids from the PCR-Block. We were aware of our duties. You are the new guard, everyone would take great care to tell us. You carry a great responsibility.

We had a great opportunity. We had every opportunity. Even one to have clean files. To erase the dark stains in our parents' past. We, the generation of a new world.

I can still remember Father's eyes lighting up whenever he spoke about our opportunities. Almost with envy. Envy and admiration. And much restraint. One had to earn this chance. Nothing comes for nothing, everything is tied to sweat. With sweat and sacrifice. Over and over again one has to sacrifice, when something important is at stake. And what could be more important than the new world, that we were going to build. Whose foundations our parents were laying down for us. No sacrifice was big enough to fulfill this duty. How privileged we were!

Oh well. That's how it went. And Father's eyes shined. And they were moist. His voice. The new times, which he would not experience. The new human. And our children. And the happiness. And our duties fulfilled.

I believe I was nearly six at the time.

No one could reproach Father. His position was clearly "healthy." He was loyal to the Party and wanted to climb high within it. I had the best future before me. No one doubted that they could rely on me. That it turned out to be otherwise is something for which Father has never forgiven me.

We, the children from the PCR-Block, were in the care of the Party and under the observation of the security agencies. They wanted to know how we were developing and to what extent we could be trusted. The experiment with the new people, the new era could not fail. I came to feel clearly the consequences of this fear. I felt watched. Followed. Shadowed. How much my parents know about this observation or wanted to know about it, I don't know. At least they didn't take me seriously. One could not speak of naiveté where they are concerned.

Father spoke of imagination and fits of hysteria. Mother always feared rape.

3

I was not yet sixteen as it all began.

By that time I had the pioneer time and an interrupted career as director of the "*Uniunea Tineretului Communist*," the Communist youth organization in my class that time already behind me. The war was over. The revolution had won. Communism had established itself. And in spite of all that I talked at assemblies about the importance of all young Communists to remain vigilant. To organize properly. To behave critically. To make it in society by virtue of their own strengths. Not only by duly paying the monthly membership fees.

It hadn't been so bad under the conditions of the time. The Party demanded criticism. Especially self-criticism. And demanded a certain degree of action. The word action excited us. It excluded the suffocating monotony. It was bound up with heroism and revolution. With violence. A form of violence of which we were not aware of at the time.

Back then one held the revolution for over. It was not until much later with Ceau•escu that the Communists would become professional revolutionaries. “*Revolutionari de profesie,*” he called it. The revolution continues. It is never complete. The class struggle never ends.

Everything that Father and Mother had taught me I wanted to apply. I felt obligated to include the others. At best I would have changed something in the organization myself. The possibility was taken away from me. I was released from my duties. Unburdened. Freed. Was condemned to passivity.

I was not yet sixteen when it all began. My performance at school was still good at that time. My talents diverse. I was the wonder child, spoke several languages fluently. I was self-confident and had some views that I also was able to defend.

I found that one didn’t have to necessarily thank the Party for the mechanization of agriculture. I said it out loud. One had to only look around at what was happening in the world. Then one knew that development and progress were the products of society. That was not received well.

Whether Father was informed of my pronouncements is unknown to me. Probably not. I was made to pay for all of that only later. All of that and much more, would later be found in my files.

My correspondence with foreign pen-pals also contributed to the assumption that I was harboring ideas as to how Communism could be reformed. At the time I wrote a novel about this, which can also be found with my confiscated documents.

I possessed qualities, which were desirable in the opinion of the party. A sense of justice. Compassion toward the oppressed and readiness to help them. They held me to be a fighting spirit and not open to compromises. It operated from the assumption that one could quickly eradicate the undesirable qualities from me.

Excellent psychologists developed behavioral profiles of us, the PCR-Block kids. So it was known early enough, that I wouldn’t go the middle way.

Adrienne Rich

Two Poems

by
Adrienne Rich

ADDRESS

Orientation of the word toward its addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant? Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other"? A word is territory shared by both addressor and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor.

V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*

If all we would speak is ideology
believable walking past pent-up Christmas trees
in a California parking lot day before Thanksgiving hot sun on faint
scent of spruce in the supermarket
mixed metaphors of food
faces expectant, baffled, angered, distracted
wandering aisles or like me and the man ahead of me, buying only milk
my car door grabbed open by a woman
thinking it her husband's car honking for her somewhere else

--and I think it true indeed I know
I who came just for milk am speaking it : though
wanting to stand somewhere beyond

this civic nausea

: desiring not to stand apart

like Jeffers giving up on his kind loving only inhuman creatures

because they transcend ideology in eternity as he thought

but he wasn't writing to them

nor today's gull perched on the traffic light

Nor can this be about remorse that merely

stands staring over its shopping cart

feeling its vague ideological thoughts

nor about lines of credit

blanketing shame and fear

nor being conscripted for violence

from without beckoning at rage within

I know what it cannot be

But who at the checkout this one day

do I address who is addressing me

what's the approach whose the manners

whose dignity whose truth

when the change-purse is tipped into the palm

for an exact amount without which

PRICES ON REQUEST

A deluxe blending machine
A chair with truth's coat-of-arms
A murderous code of manners
A silver cocktail reflecting a tiny severed hand
A small bird stuffed with print and roasted
A microwaved foie gras
A row of lucite chessmen filled with shaving lotion
A bloodred valentine to power
A watered-silk innocence
A dry-ice carrier for conscience donations
A used set of satin sheets folded to go
A box at the opera of suffering
A season at the tropical villa, all expenses
A Caterpillar's tracks gashing the environment
A bad day for students of the environment
A breakdown of the blending machine
A rush to put it in order
A song in the chapel a speech a press release

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Jim Cohn

Excerpts from "Treasures for Heaven"

by
Jim Cohn

I

Forgive me, Angels,
You had only wings, I poems
That entered me as a man
Enters the house
Of unwavering light
Thick as labyrinths
Coming apart at the bottom
Where all that could be I left for you.

II

Through the enduring memory
Of the present
I walk past the blue hells of
Delusion's
Graffiti handcuffs
That no matter how sublime
Bring greatness to the empire
For naught.

Logos 2.1 – Winter 2003

Jim Cohn

III

Soon I come to the confluence
Of spring & forever, but
I've no one to share a happy moment
Save a vague voice calling
But I'm thinking of no one special
Round the entire
Ghoulish star field
As it begins again to shift.

IV

I give you emotional radio
Live from the galaxies
Of Mercy that linger
So near
Our understanding each other
Like a woman
Who always rises late
& love that comes without bounds.

V

In your voice is an immensity
Greater than near-death
Along a stretch of cactus-dotted
Power plants where
We met on the corner
Of love-at-first-sight
With its violin wrapped tight

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Jim Cohn

In the cool silk of your arms.

X

There were boarded up windows,
& factories of corpses &
Ninety miles out of town
I can still hear the endless weeping
Of mourners at the gate where
No one has to ask why
The Angels stopped
Lighting themselves on fire.

XI

So much has changed
In so little time
& yet I still crave the sight of you
Dancing in the park
With the sun
Coming out again
From the stormy weather
Of the joy we shared.

XXIX

Your notebook was washed ashore,
But it was hardly
The last change
In the first realm of paradise
Where Love

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Jim Cohn

Dreams of the way Beauty
in all her languages says
The work of the world is peace.

XXXI

I grieve the chaos
Of the deceased in their smeared make-up
Of slit throats
Where in mid-sentence
I repent the monsters
Of unlicensed nihilism
Because I am from the massacre
& I am the massacre.

XXXIII

I've always been enchanted
By the persimmon tree
That requires
So many years to bear fruit
Even as you wipe away
The hysterical pleasures
Of self-conscious bitterness
From the eternal circle of your heart.

XXXIV

Humanitarian disaster
everywhere I turn
Reminds me of someone else

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I'll never know.
There's a tin cup on my table--
You left it here, maybe you left it for me.
I take it out to catch the tears that harmlessly fall
Thinking they've damaged the earth.

XXXVIII

You often talked with me
About the spaces
Between breaths as far richer than wealth &
So I looked there for you--
Hoping to see, touch & hear
All that is born
Like a poem
That once read is never found again.

XXXIX

At Crystal Pass
Where I wait for you
Flowers call out
To their gypsy lovers
That their tedious acceptance of praise
For one's state of mind
Is as ridiculous as
Having two feet.

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Jim Cohn

LVI

Angels, my Poem

Never sleeps--

It watches over the planet

The way a graveyard

Watches over music,

The way loss watches over war,

The way failure

Watches over the living.

LXXI

As the families arrive,

The gold-toothed undertaker

Turns off his

Hearing aids

That bleed

In the light of the blue-grey snow

As he covers her body

In full sight of the peacekeepers.

LXXII

Around the planet

Tales float of a soldier

Who almost clubbed

A young student

During a political

Firestorm

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If not for the sound
Of one chanting Om.

LXXIII

Why do we hide
Our weaknesses
Like hangmen writing elegant postcards
With ink made of urine
In the emergency rooms of memory
As doctors weigh the fingers of
Deadmen sitting in chairs
With shiny yellow badges?

LXXXV

Of one million families
Ruined by the heavy toll
Only a hundred endured.
If I was President
I'd paint the White House black--
Then I would write on its wall--
The fruits of their crackdowns
Will also prove illusory.

XCVIII

No regrets, though I wish
I'd been able to write the laughter of women.
The wild river of laughter--
My whole life,

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Immersed in this laughter.
The laughter of women--
Who can hope to reply
To such exquisite songs?

XCIX

Those who commit
The most ungodly acts
Still do so with the assurance of the feeling
That nothing will be done.
This is why we have chosen to appear
Through the madrone blossoms
Willing to give our lives
So that others might live.

C

Face to face,
The mind in its holy vacuum,
I have passed many seasons
My endless phrases
Addressed to no one--
Like the light dust
Falling upon your shoulders
As you ride past Jupiter hot springs.

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Logos 2.1 – Winter 2003

Temporarily Dead

(A Dream Play)

by

Ilja Richter

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English Adaptation by Donald Arthur

Cast of Characters

Theatre Director Pellmann = Angel

Old Woman

Little Boy

The Hanging Man = Son = Author

Mother

Conny = Mrs. Pellmann

2 Ladies in the Senior Citizens' Home

Jitters

Directress of the Senior Citizens' Home

Old Man

Inspector

Nurse

Benjamin, a Cantor

She (dubbing actress)

He (dubbing actor)

Dubbing Editor

2 Police Officers (extras)

Radio Voices: Newscaster

Maxine Fumfe

Prof Timm Ulrichs

3 Children (extras)

Time: the present

Place: Vienna/Berlin

No Intermission

Temporarily Dead

Scene 1

(Set: Theatre director Pellmann's study. A desk, a wing armchair. The back of the armchair is turned to the audience. Pellmann is packing. He sorts things out, drops occasional items on the floor, puts others aside for safekeeping, or better said, for taking along, then suddenly, precipitously, he casually knocks all the books off the desk. Now he tranquilly pulls an old suitcase out from under the desk, puts it on the emptied wooden surface and goes back to his packing. He interrupts his work, turns on his old 1950's radio. We can hear "The Blue Danube Waltz". Pellmann picks up a couple of books. The telephone rings, and while he mumbles the names of the authors to himself, he lifts the receiver.)

PELLMANN: Goethe, Schiller, Handke... (into the phone) Pellmann. No, darling, I'm packing right now. Of course. No, no books. Just plays. How I long to read a book again. (Sadly) A book! Ah, but no. Pellmann reads plays. Nothing substantial, clasped in the loving embrace of a pigskin binding, and then... (a beat) Yes, you are... you are interrupting. If you want me to get to the station on time, I'm going to have to keep at it. (another beat) Yes, I can manage that. I can still manage that. (He checks his watch.) No, I'm not going back to the office. For Christ's sake. I'm glad that show has finally punched its last Judy. I sure as hell won't. (beat) I love you, too, snookums. (annoyed) I sure as hell... let me finish. See you soon. (hangs up)

(Pellmann goes back to his packing. He can't resist the temptation and picks up a script he just tossed away. He quotes sarcastically.)

PELLMANN: "Pellmann is dreaming." "Place. The roof of a senior citizens' home. The official house flag waves in the wind."

(He tosses the book aside and mutters.)

PELLMANN: Amateurish stage direction. "The official house flag waves in the wind."

(Pellmann gets up, paces up and down and makes as if the playwright were present.)

PELLMANN: What else is it supposed to do, you ignorant desk jockey? Flags wave - that's their job. They aren't trained to do anything else, those dimwitted flags. For all I care, let it wave. Except the one on the moon. It doesn't wave; it just stands there looking stupid. It doesn't wave. Call it space paralysis.

(Pellmann reflects for a moment on the expression he just coined and smiles.)

PELLMANN: "Space paralysis" - not bad.

(He removes a note pad from his pocket and jots it down.)

PELLMANN: Playwrights wave in the wind.

(He makes a farting noise with his lips and giggles like a little kid.)

PELLMANN: What does it say on the flag?

(He picks the book up and checks it out. Reading the play:)

PELLMANN: "On the flag, it says: Senior Citizens' Castle." Asinine! "Act One, Scene one, Pellmann is dreaming..." In a pig's ass, he is! Pellmann is packing!

(But Pellmann just sits down on the armchair, his back to the audience, and lights a cigarette. Now all we can see of him is the cigarette in his left hand. In his right, the script hangs down at floor level. The radio is still playing the Strauss waltz. The music gets louder. Johann Strauss fills the room. Pellmann reads. As the music fades up, the bookshelf parts left and right like a curtain, and the silhouette of Vienna's prestigious *Burgtheater* rises slowly to the sound of the waltz until it stands enthroned as tall as a house, far above Pellmann's chair. A flag now slowly moves up the flagpole, reading: "Senior Citizen's Castle". Pellmann laughs and reads on. Slow light change. The music gets softer. The stage is dark. Then the light comes back up, but the radio keeps on playing. Pellmann falls asleep. Now he wakes up. He picks up the play, then rises from his armchair and reads the title like a question.)

PELLMANN: "Pellmann is dreaming"?

(He scratches his back and checks his watch.)

Ilja Richter

PELLMANN: God damn it! (roars) What klutz here keeps
 leaving the window open? (contemptuously) Fresh
 air? Oxygen? Wet paint. We've got to economize!

(He walks into the wings and closes an unseen window.) (off-stage:)

PELLMANN: Oh, my God! There's somebody hanging out
 there!

(Light change) (Bookshelves rise into the flies.)

Scene 2

An old garden fence with the initials C and P on it. On one of the high pointed slats, far above, there is a man hanging with a briefcase. (With his back to the audience. Rigid. Pellmann is flabbergasted. He calls up to him.)

PELLMANN: What are you doing up there? (a beat) Say something! (beat) What are you doing there? (beat) Look, I haven't got much time. My train leaves at 2:15. So, if you'd please sum up what you're doing in my garden... I mean, on my fence...

(Pellmann is not up to this situation. A distant telephone rings. Pellmann stops in his tracks.)

PELLMANN: Are you dead? Tell me, are you... (telephone rings) He's dead. (phone rings, Pellmann roars) I'm not home! I'm... dead? He's...

(He begins to understand the situation and yells:)

PELLMANN: Help! Is anybody there?! I've got a guy hanging here, for Christ's sake! Someone's hanging on my fence. And nobody...

(An old woman with a mesh shopping bag comes by.)

PELLMANN: Hey, you over there. You! Look at this! Somebody's hanging here... what am I going to...

OLD WOMAN: Say, aren't you that Pellmann fellow, the one with the theatre, who's always...?

PELLMANN: (livid) No time for that...

OLD WOMAN: (cool as a cucumber) Sure there is. Watch out somebody doesn't hang *your* buns up there. Much obliged. (exit)

PELLMANN: (struggling for a really nasty expression) You, you... (Blackout.)

(Scene change. Bookshelves descend back in place. Pellmann races over to the phone.)

PELLMANN: Yes, this is Pellmann. (indignant) Yes, *that* Pellmann. I've got somebody hanging here. What? That's normal for my theatre? Listen, I've got nothing against a cop with a hair-trigger wit, but... my train leaves at 2:15. (very angry) Vacation, get it? My wife. We're in the middle of a marital crisis, and I thought: Venice. Like before. Understand? (stops short) None of your goddamn business. Listen, there's a man hanging in my garden. And I think it's... just a sec', stay on the line...

(He sees something, walks briefly into the wings and comes back even faster, now he roars with delight into the receiver.)

PELLMANN: Oh, my God, he's moving! He is! He's alive... he's alive... (automatically, without reflecting) What is it you want? Call my secretary for an appointment!

(He hangs up.)

(Telephone rings.)

(Pellmann answers the phone.)

PELLMANN: Later!

Scene 3

(Fence. The man is hanging rigid on the top slat between C and P. To the tune of Chaplinesque action music, Pellmann puts a ladder against the fence and climbs up it to rescue the man. He misses his mark completely. Now Pellmann is hanging cheek by slat next to the other man on the fence. The old woman comes back and crosses the stage. Her shopping bag is now full.

OLD WOMAN: (passing by) Well, how goes it?

PELLMANN: (hanging) I wish it would.

OLD WOMAN: That's nice.

(The old woman helps herself to the ladder.)

PELLMANN: (hysterical) You can't do this to me!

OLD WOMAN: (remains standing there with the ladder, looks up, butter wouldn't melt in her mouth.) My very words. The whole of last year. "He can't do this to me!" I mean, really. I've been a ticket subscriber for the last thirty years. Used to go with my husband, God rest his soul. But now?

PELLMANN: Well, what about now?

OLD WOMAN: (sadly, in parting) I can't even look. (exits)

(Pellmann is hanging face forward, the other man, as indicated, with his back to the audience.)

PELLMANN: (to the other man) Say something!

(Change of light. Pellmann has now been hooked on this fence a bit longer. A shadowy atmosphere, autumnal, Viennese wine garden music from the distance [Schubert's G-Major Piano Sonata]. Suddenly a sound from the hanging man, as several sheets of paper fall from his briefcase to the ground. Pellmann tries to read the writing on the pages - no luck. The sound of a child laughing in the distance. Pellmann takes his glasses from his breast pocket, and tries reading the pages again.)

PELLMANN: Semi... no, Senator? Shit... well, what's it called? Too far... too old...

Ilja Richter

(A ball rolls onto the stage. A boy of about 10 in short pants fetches the ball.)

PELLMANN: Hey, kid!

BOY: 'Zup?

PELLMANN: I am - help!

BOY: Why?

PELLMANN: Why not?

BOY: You ain't Viennese!

PELLMANN: No - but help me anyway.

BOY: Twenty Schillings.

(Pellmann searches his pockets.)

PELLMANN: (struggling to make a joke) Oh, I ain't got a barrel of money...!

BOY: (pointing to the other man) Ask him.

PELLMANN: I think he's asleep.

BOY: Then check his pockets.

PELLMANN: I can't do that. I don't even know him.

BOY: What are you two guys doing up there anyway?

PELLMANN: (forcing good humor) Hanging around, you dope!

(The boy takes the ball and starts to exit.)

PELLMANN: Hey, kid!

BOY: (annoyed) What?!

PELLMANN: Get help!

Ilja Richter

BOY: Fifty Schillings.

(Pellmann shrugs his shoulders.)

PELLMANN: It was just twenty, you little turd!

BOY: Inflation.

(After a brief hesitation, Pellmann finally does stick his hand in the stranger's pocket, but finds nothing inside.)

PELLMANN: He doesn't have any either.

BOY: You lie! (counting rhyme) "If you're a Jew, you got money, too, and then the world belongs to you."

PELLMANN: Why, you're a regular little Brecht.

BOY: (now very annoyed) My name is Josef, you dork! My buddies are waiting for me. (starts to exit)

PELLMANN: (like a schoolteacher) Well, well, so it's Josef. Very nice. That's a Jewish name.

(With a bitter sensation in the pit of his stomach.)

PELLMANN: Are all your little friends like you?

BOY: (drily) At least they're all Viennese, droopy drawers!

PELLMANN: Charming. Well, there'll always be a Vienna. Never again will I claim there's a scarcity of playwrights. Now, how did that counting rhyme go: (he writes in his notebook) "If you're a Jew, you got money, too..."

BOY: Ah, go fuck yourself!

PELLMANN: (drily) "Go fuck yourself" doesn't fit the meter, Bertolt.

BOY: (irked) My name is Josef!

Ilja Richter

PELLMANN: Right again! Read me something, Josef.

BOY: (on his way off stage) Why?

PELLMANN: (drily) I'm getting bored.

BOY: Get your grandma to do it, grandpa!

PELLMANN: (playing for sympathy) Mine doesn't read any more. Grandma is dead.

BOY: Waddaya mean, dead? Gassed?

PELLMANN: (thrown off balance) What do you mean?

BOY: My mom says you're the King of Jewburg. And the Jews either have money, or they were gassed. But you're broke. So long! (Boy is almost off stage.)

PELLMANN: So you can't read! Okay, then forget it.

(He says demonstratively loud to the hanging man:)

PELLMANN: One less dyslectic.

(Now the hanging man speaks for the first time.)

HANGING MAN: No, one more businessman! Later on.

PELLMANN: You're alive! Well, that's a relief. Where do you keep your money? He's got us where he wants us.

HANGING MAN: Left breast pocket.

(Pellmann looks, the hanging man laughs.)

HANGING MAN: That tickles!

PELLMANN: Here you go!

(He tosses two coins to the boy.)

Ilja Richter

BOY: This is just twenty.

HANGING MAN: A businessman!

PELLMANN: (roars) Now, cut that out! You go call the fire department, and God help you if you don't!

BOY: See ya.

(The little boy runs off with the ball. A long pause, then the boy comes back with a ladder, which he leans against the garden fence.)

BOY: You don't get no fire department for twenty Schillings - just a ladder.

(Boy exits.)

HANGING MAN: Have a nice day.

(To the sound of Chaplinesque music, Pellmann first frees himself, then the hanging man from the fence. He is a man in his early forties, dressed in old-fashioned clothes. He finds his beret on the ground, puts it back on. Then he gathers up his manuscripts and puts them back in his old briefcase. Pellmann helps him, then suddenly stops.)

PELLMANN: (reads) Just a second! "Pellmann is dreaming?" "Senior Citizens' Castle." I know that play. I just...

(N.B.: As he is no longer hanging, we will now refer to the hanging man simply as "Son".)

SON: ...threw it in the wastebasket, I presume. I sent you my play. Several times. And to your literary advisor... and to several members of your company...

PELLMANN: Great suffering Christ, an actor!

SON: Not any more - I write.

PELLMANN: Even worse. A writing non-actor, right? So, you were coming to see me?

SON: Yes.

Ilja Richter

PELLMANN: Listen, I don't receive unknown playwrights in my home.

SON: Home, I like that. It's a goddamn mansion...

PELLMANN: And you thought, where there's a mansion, there's a... no way, José! No, my dear friend! Make an appointment with my secretary, or better yet with my literary advisor. After vacation time. Now, if you'll please excuse me... I've got to get to the station. My wife is waiting. Venice. You understand. It was a plea...

(The son takes a pistol out of his briefcase and points it at Pellmann.)

SON: "If we do not hang together, then surely we shall all hang separately." Benjamin Franklin.

PELLMANN: (touchy) Look I've got better things to do with my life than listen to you prove your erudition. (He suddenly decides to try another tack.) Is that a water pistol or gas?

SON: I'm allergic to gas - runs in the family.

PELLMANN: Leave me alone - I've got to finish packing.

SON: (cynically) Great idea, very effective: "Pellmann keeps packing right till the end."

(The son now loads the pistol. A clicking sound freezes Pellmann's blood in his veins. He looks over at the pistol.)

PELLMANN: You're just a crackpot!

SON: Try me!

PELLMANN: You're bluffing. (He looks at his watch.) Look, I really have to go...

Ilja Richter

SON: "Didja ever get the feeling that you wanted to go, and then you got the feeling that you wanted to stay?"

PELLMANN: (joking but still unnerved) Sure, I'm a Jimmy Durante fan, too. Now, have a nice life!

SON: I'm certainly no Durante.

PELLMANN: You said it!

SON: But I am an injured... how did you put it?

PELLMANN: Crackpot!

SON: And you, Pellmann, are not John Lennon. I definitely don't want you to give me your autograph prior to blowing your brains out.

PELLMANN: (now very nervous) Very well, now what is it you *do* want?

SON: A reading.

PELLMANN: A what!??? Sure. What would you like to read: *The Catcher in the Rye*? Good bye! (starts to go.)

SON: I have been trying to get my foot through the door of your fortress for the last year. A meeting.

PELLMANN: Lots of people want one.

SON: They keep stringing me along - your secretary. Your literary advisor's secretary. Even you...

PELLMANN: Me? Have we ever met? I mean, have we ever...?

SON: I know you, but you don't know me. Well, hardly. Once or twice, in the cafeteria... You know, I was a stagehand for a while. In your Punch and Judy show. Very humiliating. I was once a star!

PELLMANN: (incredulously) You don't say!

Ilja Richter

SON: A child star. I thought we might get together if I worked as a stagehand.

PELLMANN: What do you know, a celebrated stagehand!

SON: No, a terminated one. I was too weak. I'm more brain-oriented.

PELLMANN: Nothing like an oriental brain.

SON: Go ahead and make fun of me. But he who shoots last... (holds the pistol to his temple) Shouldn't we go inside. It's so hard to converse outdoors.

PELLMANN: (frightened) Right. As far as the eye can see, money-hungry children, venomous grannies and aging child stars with firearms, purchased at great expense from "Toys 'R' Us". Is that a Milton Bradley?

SON: No, a Steyr. Made in Austria.

PELLMANN: Bravo. A patriot.

SON: Migrant worker.

PELLMANN: Very well, come along...

(The son lowers the pistol. Pellmann walks one step, then gets a shock as he sees the time.)

PELLMANN: God damn, my train is just leaving...

(Viennese music begins, like the action music for an imaginary film.)

PELLMANN: I see her standing there before me: my wife on the platform, watching our train leave the station. Looking daggers at the phone booth, as if *it* could do anything. I mean, I heard it ring.

SON: So did I.

Ilja Richter

PELLMANN: I can recognize my wife by her ring. (startles) You heard it ring? From up there?

SON: Yeah. Eight times. I counted them.

(The music stops.)

PELLMANN: What's that supposed to mean? (a beat) You mean, you were only pretending to...

(The son answers with a smile.)

PELLMANN: Tell me, do you usually hang around someone's fen...

SON: You're not just someone.

PELLMANN: (flattered) Thank you.

SON: You're Pellmann. (pointedly continuing) And for years you've been harping on the same old "no playwrights" chord, but ignoring my play, and it's really a good play. Such a good...

PELLMANN: If you had only hanged yourself in the Burgtheater - with some sense of tradition - your play certainly would have had a chance. Later, perhaps. But they would have done it.

SON: At least *you'll* see it.

PELLMANN: What?

SON: My play. You're going to read it.

PELLMANN: Thanks to you, my wife is standing on the station platform, sweating, cursing. (looks at his watch) Well, maybe not any longer.

(For a moment he forgets the man is threatening him and begins treating him like a close friend who needs the plot of a film explained to him.)

Ilja Richter

PELLMANN: You know, Venice was our last chance. Our first vacation in five years. And now this. (Now he sees him again as his torturer.) Now, where were we?

SON: With your sweating, cursing wife.

PELLMANN: Thank you. She leaves the station without her luggage.

SON: I getcha - so you'll buy her new stuff.

PELLMANN: Exactly.

SON: Matched designer cases.

PELLMANN: You got it! My wife's got taste. (startles) You know my wife?

SON: Oh, yes.

PELLMANN: (now all director, forgetting the present situation.) That reading on "oh, yes!" Now, if you were a member of my company, we'd have some hard work to do on that "oh, yes". I know those "oh, yes" actors. Good thing you're not acting any more. Write. Write your fingers to the nubbins! But keep your mandibles off "oh, yes"! I hate that. When actors bug out their eyes like characters in soap commercials, and they spell everything out for the audience, then they say: "Oh, yes!"

(The son asks Pellmann to hold the pistol, so he can note that down.)

SON: Hold this a sec, please. (notes down) "Oh yes" actors. Soap commercials. Spelling everything out. Oh, yes.

PELLMANN: No. "Oh, yes!" Got it? (startles) What's the point of all this. Are you planning to cut the "oh, yes!"es out of your play?

SON: No, I'm just padding your part.

Ilja Richter

PELLMANN: What are you talking about!? (a bead) Oh, yes, right. "Pellmann is dreaming." (roars) Bullshit! "Pellmann is leaving!"

(He lets fly with another cascade of verbiage.)

PELLMANN: Look, I'm having a marital crisis. The theatre is on vacation. My wife is about to come storming in. Now, be a good sport and get the hell out of here! Go anywhere you want, just leave me al...

(Pellmann now notices for the first time that he has the pistol in his hand.)

SON: It's a fake.

PELLMANN: Bluff.

SON: Pull the trigger. The only good writer is a dead writer!

(Pellmann shoots. Nothing happens.)

PELLMANN: I knew it!

SON: But this one *is* real!

(The son takes a small, dainty lady's pistol out of his briefcase.)

PELLMANN: Cute.

SON: Petite - but loaded.

PELLMANN: Just like my wife. So long.

(The son loads the pistol and aims at the initials on the garden gate. Shot. Part of the "C" falls down. Pellmann, after his initial shock over the pistol really being loaded, tosses the toy gun on the ground and does something totally unexpected. He leans the ladder against the garden gate, climbs up and hangs himself calmly back on one of the slats. The son is taken aback. Pellmann lights a cigarette.)

(Cigarette break.)

PELLMANN: Now read the sucker! I'm all ears, you asshole!

(The sun pulls himself together, sits down, after some initial hesitation, in front of the garden gate, and puts the lady's pistol away. He gathers the remaining pages from the ground, sorts them into a pile, takes the second pile out of his briefcase. Of course, this generates a break in the action. As he is about to start reading, a group of three to four boys starts frolicking across the stage, playing catch, among them our "little businessman". The boy briefly looks up, sees Pellmann, sees the son, discovers the toy pistol, picks it up, has a good laugh and then runs off after the others, shooting as he goes.)

SON: (starting to read) "Pellmann is dreaming. A flag waves on the roof of the senior citizens' home.

PELLMANN: (hanging, smoking, impatient) It says "Senior Citizens' Castle" on it. Right. Get on with it. I'm on vacation.

(As the son continues reading, the things he describes become visible to the audience. That is to say: a roof with a neon sign reading "Senior Citizens' Castle". Although the background is clearly the Berlin skyline, the roof has a peculiar similarity to the Burgtheater in Vienna. An old woman (the mother) is sitting on the roof drinking Lydia Pinkham's tonic. Her face is made-up in white, like a circus clown, her hair parted in the middle and tied in a bun, her mouth made up with a fire-engine red kissy mouth. Claus Pellmann's garden gate is still visible. He is still hanging on the slat. The new set, the roof, is bifurcated by the garden fence - in other words, the two sets have mated.)

Scene 4.

SON: (reads) Act one, scene one, skyscraper roof.

PELLMANN: I see it more as an old building, you know, somewhat ornate, little angels, trumpets.

(The son briefly points the pistol at him.)

SON: Shut up, Pellmann.

PELLMANN: Talked me into it. "Pellmann is dreaming."

(The son notices that the set is not modern, and says:)

SON: Talked me into it. "Old building". (Pellmann closes his eyes.) "Son on the ground."

PELLMANN: (hanging) Yeah, sure. Scraping his way through the bottom of the barrel.

SON: "The son is reading his script, the mother drinking Lydia Pinkham. In the sky: an angel over Berlin, getting ready to land."

PELLMANN: (opens his eyes) Anyway an angel. With our without the trumpet, Mr. Benny?

SON: (threateningly sets down his script, takes off Pellmann's left shoe and sock and now points the pistol at the sole of his foot.) Pellmann, this is my play! Now, either you play along, or else...

PELLMANN: (can't help laughing, because the pistol is tickling his foot.) Talked me into it. I can see it all before me. Clear as day. The play's the thi...

SON: You call me Jack Benny one more time, and I pull the trigger!

PELLMANN: (looks over at the mother) You mean to tell me that clown over there is your mother?

Ilja Richter

SON: How did you know?

PELLMANN: My God, I have an overview of the situation - call it angelic perception, get me? (seamlessly) Just incidentally, you know Jack Benny...

(Pellmann stops for a second, not knowing how the other man will react to Benny.)

PELLMANN: ...didn't blow his horn in that movie, despite the liars and cheats and con artists and all that crap. Left them right there where they were.

(While Pellmann is talking about liars and cheats and con artists, the garden fence sinks down below the roof. This puts Pellmann's feet back on the ground and will, in the course of the evening, put in an occasional appearance to restore a touch of "reality" to our dream play. Pellmann reads the part of the angel like an underrehearsed understudy who hasn't quite gotten into the part. The characters around him all behave with great pathos, but even Pellmann will begin getting into the drama in the course of the constant change between roof and library. Roof: neon sign "Senior Citizens' Castle". And old lady in a dressing gown, white make-up, red bee-sting lips. [86, hair parted in the middle and coiffed into a tight bun in the back, stands agitatedly at the edge of the roof.]

MOTHER: "I'm just a piece of shit!" I'm just a piece of shit.

...

(Drinks her Lydia Pinkham.) (Sings softly.)

MOTHER: Berlin is such a raunchy place,
Berlin is such a raunchy place (bursts into tears.)
A city with a fresh-washed face.
There ain't no better town than that,
The city where my heart is at.
My heart is at, my heart is in?
How should I know? I talk like I talk.
(laughing through her tears.)
Since my poor heart away you took,
Ain't got no time to check the grammar book.

(The son appears on the extreme upstage side of the roof, about 40, pale, trench coat, briefcase, beret. He sees the danger on the edge of the roof and makes a forced joke.)

SON: Why? You got something against grammar?

Ilja Richter

MOTHER: (stops singing, smiles, then goes on singing.)
Can't put no staples on my heart.

Ilja Richter

SON: (moves toward the mother, singing along)
There ain't no better place than that!
The city where my heart is at!

MOTHER: My heart is at, my heart is in...? (screams at him) I
talk like I talk!

SON: (trying to calm his mother) Okay, Mama, now
come on home.

MOTHER: (screams even louder) Home!? Are you out of your
tiny Hebrew mind?!

SON: (yells back at her) That matter has yet to be settled!

MOTHER: The matter of your tiny mind?

SON: The Hebrew issue...

MOTHER: (takes another slug from the bottle) You're always
what your mother is. And when you shit in your
bed at night, drink Lydia Pinkham, and your
mother is...

...

SON: (interrupts his mother, quoting) "A piece of shit", I
know! But that's just a quote, for...

MOTHER: For shit's sake, that's what you were going to say!
That's how you talk about your poor mother in
your play. (drinks) Shitty play!

SON: A quote from your daughter. (drinks)

MOTHER: She isn't my daughter any more.

SON: When was she? And what about the other three
specimens?

MOTHER: (drinks) Yeah. Priced for every budget.

Ilja Richter

SON:

But I did the best marketing. (now again gentler to his mother) Now, will you please come home.

Ilja Richter

MOTHER: Marketing? You sold out your own mother!
(mocking her son) "Please come home." Room
thirteen in the Senior Citizens' Castle. Some home!
A bunch of old biddies and a directress who looks
like a stand-in for Leni Riefenstahl.

(The neon sign goes out.)

MOTHER: And a cheapskate to boot! She probably thinks if
an old lady jumps off her roof, she doesn't need to
advertise it.

SON: You aren't going to jump!

MOTHER: Are you sure?

SON: (very softly to his mother) Absolutely. Now, give
me that Blue Nun... (His mother hands him the
bottle.)

MOTHER: (weeping while her son drinks) It's all I've got left!
(The bottle is empty.)

SON: And now you haven't got any more of this!
Mother, you've got me!

MOTHER: Yes, and I hate you! Bottle!

SON: (distracting her) What do blue nuns shit?

MOTHER: (answers crying) The cream of the crap.

(Both of them alternate between laughter and tears. They sit down on the edge of the
roof. She strokes him.)

MOTHER: Mind you, I've got nothing against nuns. It was
Catholic nuns that...

SON: (wearily) "...saved your mother and brother..."

MOTHER: (annoyed) Yes, indeed! Saved them from the gas
man!

Ilja Richter

SON: I'm not making fun of anything, but what do you think your cheap imitation son in Tel Aviv is going to think of you? He's asking for it! Uncircumcised - good luck! They'll drop him like a pit from the Mount of Olives. And as he falls, there'll be a word from King Shloimele on his lips. Something pious about fallen mothers, no doubt, will occur to him, the sacred touchas of the family.

MOTHER: Oy, such a failure. A voice like Gigli, but no, he's got to become a cantor! (a beat) He could be a musical star today.

SON: Hot shit, said the Fiddler on the Roof and crapped down the chimney.

MOTHER: Tasteless.

SON: Who did I learn it from?

MOTHER: You could have been right at the top if only you'd listened to me. And now here I stand on the edge of the abyss.

SON: You're sitting down. (a beat) Look, Mama, if that desk clerk in Munich hadn't mistakenly put my script in your cubbyhole, you wouldn't be...

MOTHER: ...here in Berlin now - on the brink of a nervous breakdown. That's the emmes!

(She rises to her feet, looking down contemptuously at her son.)

MOTHER: I would at least have waited until that maternal exorcism of yours came out. The title alone: "Sonny Boy - the Eternal Child Star". (hysterical) What the hell is that supposed to mean?

SON: (yelling even louder) It means, Mamalebber, that as far as you're concerned I'm still running around in a sailor suit at the age of forty! Unfortunately, those parts get a little sparse at my age.

(He sobs. She sobs. They embrace. A shooting star appears in the sky.)

- MOTHER: Look, precious, a shooting star. Make a wish.
- SON: A wish? There's none of the nun left, what else could happen. Oh, yes! I wish...
- MOTHER: Already granted! What did you wish?
- SON: ...that I wouldn't have to get fined in Munich.
- MOTHER: Fined?
- SON: (looks at his watch, then drily) Because I should be taking my final bow there at this very minute. In Munich. Closing performance. In that crummy little theatre down the hill from the Bavarian Parliament building, so Mommy dearest can thwack her palms together again.
- MOTHER: (appalled) How many time have I told you: the show must go on. It's the first rule of the theatre.
- SON: (sarcastically) Is it? Does it also apply to sons who get that kind of message in their hotel cubbyhole?

(He takes the script out of his briefcase. Mother is embarrassed. Pellmann takes the script away from him, leafs through it. Pellmann is [still!] invisible to the mother and son. The son takes out a piece of message paper.)

- MOTHER: I know what I wrote you before I left, you don't need to...
- SON: Oh, yes I do! I enjoy it! (a hostile scream) Berlin, awake, and laugh at Mother Garbage and her latest message: "That play - made of the same shit that you are made of - is flying back to Berlin where it will first commit suicide!" I have seldom seen the desk clerk at The Four Seasons look so pale - at least *that* was good for a laugh.

(He repeats the last sentence with a theatrical tone, holding the message up for deaf heaven to witness.)

Ilja Richter

SON: "...where it will first commit suicide."

MOTHER: It must have looked just like this when Moses, the headwaiter of the Old Testament, took the Lord's order.

(A thunderclap.)

SON: "...where it will first commit suicide." I really have to let that "first" melt in my mouth. So: summing things up: first dead, right, Mamacakes? Fine, and what do we do in the afternoon?

(Another thunderclap, he takes her in his arms. Both exit.)

(Viennese music.)

PELLMANN: (quoting Friedrich Holländer in *Sprechgesang* from the script.)
He stayed for lunch, remained to dine.
Before bed, he drank his magic wine.
His got lethargic, fell asleep.
At the time, he was a pretty ancient creep.
Then came summer's sun and winter's tears.
In all, I think, that bastard stuck around for seven years!

(Pellmann strolls behind a chimney. When he reappears, there are two very beautiful, snow-white angel wings on his back. He is still unaware of this transformation. The wings are crudely attached to wide suspenders over his suit. He leafs through the script like a bureaucrat.)

ANGEL: (babbling) Well, what's on today's schedule? Oh, yes, right: *Nabucco* sing-along in the club room under the direction of our charming directress. Honestly! I could be in Macedonia now, where a couple of mercenaries are getting ready to rape a five-year-old child, or... (he leafs through the pages) Right: or in the Dominican Republic. (He looks off in the distance.) Where a Republican is just putting out his cigar on a Cuban, of all people. For meddling in some internal Dominican business. No such luck: what do I get? *Nabucco!*

Robin Melville

Review

Longitudes & Attitudes by Thomas L. Friedman

reviewed by
Robin Melville

Regrettably, given the enormity of its occasion—the events of 11 September 2001 and their consequences—Thomas Friedman’s *Longitudes & Attitudes* is rather a bathetic book. But how could it not be? It is surely the rare media commentator who has ever been able to bring to his regular, too frequent observations a depth of insight which makes what he writes transcend its particular moment to provide more generally applicable instruction. And Friedman is demonstrably not one of those. Neither, clearly, is he one of those, a Boswell acquainted with an at least interesting and perhaps even profound Johnson, who can then broadcast to others insights beyond his own capacity to generate. For a Boswell must be able to at least recognize such insights for what they are. Besides, Friedman’s “Johnsons” are for the most part men distinguished by little but their transitory possession of power or influence, whose casual remarks he sometimes even describes as “wise.”

To be sure, Friedman’s book is explicitly based largely on columns published in the Op-Ed pages of *The New York Times*. But both the fact and the nature of the compilation and its accompanying pieces—an introduction, a prologue, “The Super-Story,” and a concluding “Diary,” “Travels in a world without walls: September 11, 2001–July 3, 2002,” and also an acknowledgments section of some interest—surely require that the book be treated as a book. Were one simply reviewing a series of newspaper columns published over an extended period of time, even in so august a publication as the *Times*, the critical criteria to be applied to them would be rather different. Yet since his book is so intimately linked to his journalism, I would wish to suggest—heeding an ancient suggestion that one may more readily discern what is written large than what is written small—that what we may discern in Friedman the author may also tell something about Friedman the columnist.

It is in his introduction that one first encounters evidence that Friedman is not inclined to explore matters deeply. It is certainly gratifying to those of us who worry about the wages received for laboring for others that he gets paid satisfactorily to do something he really enjoys doing—to be paid to be, as he describes himself, “a tourist with an attitude” (ix). That is no doubt why he devotes the entire first paragraph of his acknowledgements to praising and thanking Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., and the Sulzberger family. But surely his claim that he can take any stance he wants on an issue

I have been the foreign affairs columnist since January 1995, and since then I have never had a conversation with the Publisher of *The New York Times* about any opinion I’ve adopted—before or after any column I’ve written. (x)

elides too casually over such matters of controversy as how media personnel are selected and how they are then fashioned. Before Friedman became its foreign affairs columnist in 1995, he had worked for the *Times* in various capacities since 1981, advancing fairly steadily through the ranks. Is it not likely that in these 14 years he had learned what Robert Darnton termed the “sociology of the newsroom,” had come to embody, as other successful employees did, the values of “the good *Times*man?” (See Edwin Diamond, *Behind the Times*, ch. 8.) Would he have risen as he did had he not shown that he belonged, that he could be trusted to fit in? Friedman may, of course, disagree with such analyses of the *Times* and the managerial style of the Sulzberger family. But his mere assertion of his autonomy does not begin to come to grips with arguments with which he must surely be familiar. Mere assertion is, however, one of Friedman’s favored modes of argument, even in matters he manifestly takes to be important. So he is hardly likely to have hesitated to employ it in such a minor matter as the one addressed here.

Friedman’s rise, it is also relevant to note, coincided with the development of the “opinion *Times*” (Diamond, ch. 9)—rather before television executives discovered the profitability of “reality TV,” the *Times* was discovering how much cheaper it was to deal in opinion rather than hard news. *Longitudes & Attitudes* bears witness to this: how much digging and reporting could Friedman have done while jetting around from Washington, D.C., to Kabul, to Jacobabad, Pakistan, to Washington, to Brussels, and to Washington again, meeting with others whose vocation it is to be opinionated, during the last three weeks of January 2002, during which time he also contributed seven columns. (Thus, by the way, does he come to know what is the mind-

set of “the Arab street”—a favorite collective concept of his; another is “the electronic herd.” How does he get away with it when others in this hyper-rational individualistic age are called to task for employing collective concepts much more carefully developed than this?) To be sure, authenticity-suggesting by-lines do not come cost free. And neither, no doubt, does Friedman. For he is by now a skilled entertainer who does not need to be reminded not to be “too complicated, or too sophisticated”—one of the six rules of the *Times* Op-Ed page enunciated by the deputy editor of that page in 1989 (Diamond, 279-80)—who knows how to shape his columnist persona to please the *Times*’ particular audience/market. To these things, too, does *Longitudes & Attitudes* bear witness. That these things help explain his book’s existence seems further plausible: the audience for the columns and the audience for the book partially overlap and mutually reinforce each other, to the material advantage of both the newspaper publisher and the book publisher, and Friedman as well.

Friedman’s disinclination to explore matters deeply is further evident in his prologue, where he provides what might be termed the metatheoretical and theoretical underpinnings of his twice-weekly columns and the unifying themes of his book. Those who might be deterred by the difficulty of such philosophical notions are quickly encouraged not to worry, for it is a somewhat condescending Tom Everyman who will be their guide:

I am a big believer in the idea of the super-story, the notion that we all carry around with us a big lens, a big framework, through which we look at the world, order events, and decide what is important and what is not. (3)

No effeteness here, this tough-sounding, down-to-earth style reassures; we are meeting up with a real man’s man—why, he even, so he tells us in several book acknowledgments he has published, plays golf for money with guys who aren’t the least bit interested in ideas. (e.g., 383) But now the tone begins to shift a little, for an audience which has been comforted that it need not fear erudition must nevertheless not be allowed to forget its place, or his; just a small reminder that he has some social science should do it.

The events of 9/11 did not happen in a vacuum. They happened in the context of a new international system—a system that cannot explain everything but *can* explain and connect more things in more places on more days than

anything else. That new international system is called globalization. . . . This new system is the lens, the super-story, through which I viewed the events of 9/11. (3)

It is interesting to note, by the way, that despite his own understanding that the events of 9/11 require explanation, Friedman seems most hostile to others who are seeking explanations. Thus, on October 5, 2001, he is railing against those in the foreign press and in campus teach-ins whom he portrays as asking why it happened rather than uttering outright condemnation. But, then, they can only be making conjectures. He, on the other hand, is providing to the world the Friedman theory, which is seemingly so obviously true as to require no great elaboration and defense in the face of theoretical or evidentiary criticism and which brooks no opposition.

Globalization, as he goes on to tell us in his prologue, is

the inexorable integration of markets, transportation systems, and communication systems to a degree never witnessed before—in a way that is enabling corporations, countries, and individuals to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper, and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is enabling the world to reach into corporations, countries, and individuals farther, faster, deeper, and cheaper than ever before. (3)

To correctly understand the events of 9/11, we must, he tells us, appreciate two major features of globalization. First, the world is no longer characterized by division. It is now characterized by integration. We have gone from a world of walls to a world enwebbed. (4) But, although “we are all connected and nobody is quite in charge” now, some of us do not benefit from the new system. And some—“people who feel overwhelmed by it, homogenized by it, or unable to keep pace with its demands”—may lash back at it. (4) But since according to Friedman the changes are inexorable and seemingly impersonal, we begin to understand, perhaps, why he takes the views that he does of those whom the new system disadvantages. (For some reason I am at this point reminded of Winston Churchill’s attitude toward the British coal miners back in 1926: he pitied their condition so long as they remained passive before the inexorable greed of the coal owners, but God help them if *they* dared to try to do something about it. Paternalists are so predictable.)

The second major feature of globalization Friedman urges upon his readers' attention is built around three overlapping, interacting "balances": the "traditional balance of power between nation-states"; the balance of power between nation-states and global markets—our world is defined both by the sole remaining Superpower and by the newer Supermarkets; and thirdly, there is "the newest [balance] of all and the most relevant to the events of 9/11," that between individuals and nation-states (5)—individuals "super-empowered" by the new technologies and the new modes of connecting with others across the face of the earth, "some of [whom] are quite angry, some of [whom] are quite wonderful" (6)—surely an interesting comparison, full of implications for the evaluation of behavior. But is it really the case that Jody Williams, who worked so hard to rid the world of land mines, whom Friedman juxtaposes to Osama bin Laden, was not angry about what was being done to the world? (6) Besides, Friedman himself allows at several points in his present text—oddly, in language that seems not to convey it particularly well—that he is angry. Anger, it would thus seem, does not constitute a very useful mark of malevolence.

But there we have it:

You will never understand the globalization system, or the front page of the morning paper—or 9/11—unless you see each as a complex interaction between all three of these actors: states bumping up against states, states bumping up against Supermarkets, and Supermarkets and states bumping up against super-empowered individuals—many of whom, unfortunately, are super-empowered angry men. (6)

That—four pages, much of them given over to deliberately and not necessarily fairly chosen examples and exhortation—is purportedly what informs and unites what follows. Those who wish more detailed discussion of these notions, Friedman directs to his previous book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. But it is difficult to tell whether all of the features of the system he sketches here actually do have a place in that other prolix, repetitious, assertion- and anecdote-laden account of the on-going transformation of our world. In short, the very amorphousness of Friedman's presentations makes it difficult to tell exactly what beyond the commonplace his "super-story" is. Since, however, we inhabit a time and place in which, as Bob Woodward has now revealed to us in his recently published *Bush At War*, such concepts as "pounding sand" and "boots on the ground" now figure hugely in the arcane

imperial deliberations of our most high, there is perhaps more to the notion of “bumping up against” than I have yet been able to figure out?

The core of *Longitudes & Attitudes* consists of 92 columns, now chapters, each conforming to the 740-word length requirement set by the *Times*. The eleven chapter-columns in the section entitled “Before” first appeared at a scattering of moments in the nine months preceding 9/11; the last of these, “Walls,” appeared on the morning of 11 September itself. This section would seem to serve at least two functions: to provide some scene setting for what follows and to establish Friedman’s intimate, indeed prescient knowledge of the new world about to be so violently born. The “After” section is composed of the columns—he seems to have left almost none of them out—which appeared every three or four days, with only a couple of brief breaks, between 13 September 2001 and 3 July 2002 (while the beginning date is obvious, the concluding date remains unexplained). Here especially, self-portrayed as the intimate of the powerful and the privileged, the royal, the economic, intellectual and media élites, in places most of us will probably never even visit, we encounter Friedman in his roles as adviser to princes, as castigating prophet, as international prosecutor and judge, and as the guide to the perplexed and ignorant but sovereign *Times*-reading public through the intricate by-ways of an alien, troubling hell of a world. Part of the time, too, we encounter Friedman as a sort of superhero, “Friedman of the *Times*,” risking his all, despite the entreaties of his daughters, in Kabul, Peshawar, Bethlehem, Jidda, Jakarta and Tehran, and let us not forget many-mosqued Brussels (27 January 2002; Diary, 330-337), so that we—and they, the inhabitants of these distant, usually unusually benighted, places—might receive enlightenment. (But thanks to modern technology he has not had to suffer the fate of those earlier heroes who ventured to many-towered Ilion; no ten or twenty year absence from home for him so that order-disrupting injury may be avenged. Not only that. He could even make sure distinguished U.S. senators got home too—for, such is his power, it was he who could call the State Department from Afghanistan on his cell phone and make it possible for the Secretary of State to order a military officer to let Senator Biden and Friedman board a military plane to Pakistan [Diary, 328-9].) At other times, however, his language betrays it, he is Tom Everyman, who cannot be blandished or led astray by overly sophisticated (mis)representations of reality from bluntly speaking the plain truth of that reality to power in paternalistic defense not only of his daughters but of all his fellow citizens.

Having alluded to Friedman's literary style at several points, let me note one of its particularly disquieting features: his tendency to make his points through appeals to authority. Notwithstanding his openly expressed contempt for media experts—indeed, his column on the virtues of golf and the Golf Channel could be taken to reveal him to be a self-hating pundit (21 April 2002)—he again and again relies on “the Middle East expert,” “the foreign policy expert,” etc., quite a number of whom would appear, from his acknowledgments, to be his personal friends. So long ago as 1989 Edward Said chided him for his reliance on “trusted gurus” whose opinions he self-servingly “palms off . . . as reasonable, uncontested, secure” (reprinted in *The Politics of Dispossession*, ch. 34). In fact, most of the criticism Said then directed at Friedman, from his tone, to his mode of argumentation, to his simplification of complex issues, to his contradictoriness, would seem to apply to the book presently under review. It may even be, as with his repeated reliance on a few friendly experts, that these flaws have become more pronounced as he has grown in confidence and acclaim. But, of course, Said is not someone I would expect Friedman to pay much heed to.

When not relying on argument from authority, Friedman relies on argument by anecdote—anecdote after anecdote after anecdote—and argument by assertion. This is not, I think, simply a consequence of the fact that this particular book is composed of newspaper columns. It would seem to be his customary style. One example from his *Lexus and the Olive Tree*, which is more deliberately constructed as a book, I found particularly striking, especially since it resonates with his condemnations in *Longitudes & Attitudes* of the stupid, the misguided and the malevolent who do not understand or accept the inexorability of globalization: “There is no Third Way. There is only one way—the balanced way.” (I still think Margaret Thatcher said it better—TINA, “There Is No Alternative.”)

Despite his declaration that we, all of us, inhabit a world undergoing radical transformation, Friedman himself is not, or so it seems to me, immune to lapsing into a certain kind of fundamentalist backlash:

But most of all, of course, I was angry that the America I had grown up in would never be quite the same for my two daughters aged thirteen and sixteen. . . It was a new world knocking—not one that I had grown up in, but one my girls would now grow up in—and I didn't want to let it in. (Diary, 298-9; see also September 25, 2001)

It is this reaction which begins, I think, to explain the otherwise odd homage to one of his high-school teachers in the scene-setting segment of his book (January 9, 2001).

In contemplating his homage, I do not mean to suggest either that his journalism teacher, Hattie M. Steinberg, is not deserving of his public thanks and praise or that he, Friedman, is entirely insincere in proffering these. But—perhaps it is my age—it is quite a shock to encounter Friedman’s account of the world as he saw it in the tenth grade in 1969 America. He was clearly already aware that there was a troubling world out there. His first published story in the school newspaper, based on a lecture he attended on the Six-Day War and an interview with the lecturer, Ariel Sharon, reveals that he already had been made acquainted with massive violence. But one would never guess from what he says in this chapter or in the related sections of his Diary, that he arrived at the age of reason in Sixties America, at a time when the United States was riven over Vietnam, or that before he would graduate from college there would be secret wars and Watergate and so much else. Friedman’s America of his youth sounds more like a regurgitation of some complaint he heard from his fifties-era parents, about how wonderful things used to be back in their youth. But as Raymond Williams has shown in his exploration of pastoral bliss, it always existed yesterday.

Nevertheless, it surely staggers belief in those who experienced the sixties in America to be told that they lived through a Golden Age. Perhaps his myth mongering is no more than an accompaniment to the fact that he and those he deeply cares for are now experiencing in ways he cannot accept the inexorable change he elsewhere celebrates. But I fear he is also trying to (re)construct a myth of America the beautiful, of an idyllic United States that never really was, not only to encourage his fellow citizens as they wage “World War III” (September 13, 2001) but also to employ it as a weapon against his enemies in the war between good and evil. It also serves, perhaps, to emphasize the grandeur of Friedman’s own struggle. For, his pre-9/11 America is a veritable Garden of Eden. And we all know who it was who brought about the fall of the first one

I say “his enemies”—which on the basis of this present book are legion—because again and again in *Longitudes & Attitudes* Friedman is clearly seeking to define who and what the enemy is for the U.S. political leadership

and the U.S. public, or at least the influential *Times*-reading public. He is urging them to make his struggle their own. But this brings us to another problem with the book he has constructed. When one encounters only after the space of several days yet another excoriation of most of the Middle Eastern Arab leaders or Islamic religious leaders and followers, one has had sufficient time to think of other things and perhaps even encounter other views, some perhaps harsher, perhaps some not so harsh. It is a very different matter when one encounters repetition after repetition of Friedman's assertions within the space of a few pages. Perhaps if one were to read the book over the space of, say, a calendar year, one would view it differently. But who reads books as one reads newspaper columns, especially books purporting to be topical and relevant, in this fashion. And surely Friedman did not want his book to be read that way.

So it has to be said that as a book Friedman's enterprise fails because it is just too blatantly manipulative. As a book, it has some of the relentlessness of religious fanaticism—which is awfully hard to take. Had he or an editor been more selective, the outcome might have been somewhat different—though even selectivity would not have eliminated other of the failings I have noted. Here it has to be noted again, that to the 92 reprinted columns Friedman adds an 85-page Diary, which adds almost nothing significant to what has gone before, though it does permit him to express with even greater prolixity notions he has already conveyed several times and to provide us even more views of him being received in a royal Saudi tent or in a Jordanian palace or mingling with Israeli “terrorist experts,” or encountering admiring fans. But books, especially nowadays, do not just happen. They are the product of at least some economic thought and market calculation. The very failure to be selective, to exercise constraint, thus would seem to be not so much an error of judgement as an error of character. Perhaps it is merely the error of pursuing one's own material advantage a little bit too vigorously?

But I fear it may be something worse in one who so evidently aspires to provide political leadership: vanity, “the need personally to stand in the foreground as clearly as possible,” as Weber put it. For consider the way in which he concludes his Diary and his book, a story told to him by a fellow *Times* journalist about his visit down into the dark depths beneath Ground Zero. There, on a bench adjacent to some derelict and some destroyed PATH cars, a newspaper, a *New York Times*, open, would you believe it, at Friedman's 11 September column, “Walls.” As his colleague told him,

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“When I saw that headline on your column—it just really hit me that this is what it was all about” (378-9). So now we know. The real target, the real occasion for the attacks of 9/11 was Thomas Friedman himself, Friedman of the *Times*, and his ideas. One would probably never have suspected that from his columns. So perhaps, despite its many flaws it’s a good thing he has published his book. Otherwise we might never have known how to properly interpret his writings or understand the true depths of his fears and his passions or the true greatness of his self-assigned task.

Manfred B. Steger

Review

The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics by Mark Lilla

by
Manfred B. Steger

A collection of six extended reviews that originally appeared in shorter versions in *The New York Review of Books* and *The Times Literary Supplement*, Mark Lilla's *Reckless Mind* has been received with much interest. Indeed, a roundtable discussion of the book organized at the 2002 meeting of the American Political Science Association in Boston drew a large audience. The book is written in an extraordinarily lucid and accessible style without sacrificing intellectual sophistication. Even for those critics, like this reviewer, who disagree with the author's approach, it is difficult not to admire his broad understanding of continental political philosophy. There is no question that *Reckless Minds* represents an elegant collection of essays that manages to inform, provoke, and engage its readers.

Lilla ponders the role of intellectuals in politics—a subject that has exerted great appeal to a broad spectrum of twentieth century philosophical voices ranging from Jean-Paul Sartre and Antonio Gramsci on the left and Raymond Aron and Julien Benda at the center to Michael Oakeshott and Allan Bloom on the right. Lilla's variation on the theme—why did certain philosophers (in this case, Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, Walter Benjamin, Alexandre Kojève, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida) support political tyrannies?—is not particularly new, coming fifteen years after the international controversy over Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi regime, which erupted after the publication of Victor Farias's revealing account. What makes Lilla's book such a provocative contribution, then, is not the novelty of its subject matter, but some of his most daring—perhaps even reckless—intellectual maneuvers.

For one, Lilla resolutely rejects any historicist explanation in favor of a rather simplistic psychological account resting on a peculiar mix of neo-Straussian soul talk and liberal individualism. Second, he applies the label "philotyrannical intellectuals" in a rather abstruse and indiscriminate manner

to thinkers with profoundly different philosophical frameworks, historical contexts, and political commitments. Third, there is the question of historical accuracy. As someone who has some familiarity with the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, I cannot help but wonder when, exactly, did Walter Benjamin support tyranny? In fact, Lilla himself concedes that “Benjamin’s Marxism remained deskbound, and every encounter he had with real Communist politics left him disaffected.” So why include the literary critic in a list of philotyrannical intellectuals headed by the likes of Heidegger and Schmitt, who enthusiastically supported tyrannical regimes?

Unfortunately, this brief review will not allow me to address these three points in sufficient detail. Indeed, I will have to confine my remarks to what appears to me to be the central problem with the book: its ahistorical psychologism. Since it is not until the end of the study that the author gives a full account of his Platonist explanation for the philosophers’ reckless support of authoritarian regimes, I would advise readers to begin with the afterword, titled “The Lure of Syracuse.” Offering an idealized interpretation of Plato’s three famous unsuccessful voyages to Syracuse, undertaken at the behest of his beloved student Dion in the hope of imparting philosophical wisdom to the city’s tyrant Dionysius the Younger, Lilla quickly arrives at what he considers to be the moral of the story: short of a miracle, rational philosophers will never succeed in turning tyrants toward the Just and the Good. The best arrangement that can be hoped for is not the political rule of lovers of wisdom, but the temporary establishment of a somewhat sensible government under the rule of law. According to Lilla, however, a good number of twentieth-century philosophers disregarded Plato’s wise pleas for moderation and instead succumbed to the lure of modern tyrannies. They willingly and openly served Hitler, Stalin, Milosevic, and other modern versions of Dionysius in word and deed. Thus Lilla’s central question: how can we explain their failings?

Much to the author’s credit, he does reflect on the possible utility of historical approaches in answering this question. After all, a careful, case-by-case consideration of pertinent historical forces seems to be an important part of any serious attempt to find adequate explanations for why Heidegger betrayed his mentor Husserl with a joyous “Heil Hitler” on his lips or why Schmitt wasted significant amounts of his mental energy on anti-Semitic diatribes that insulted his intelligence. As Lilla suggests, an historian of political ideas might argue with Isaiah Berlin that the intellectual support of modern forms of authoritarianism is rooted in Western philosophical

traditions characterized by their hostility to diversity and plurality. Other historians of ideas might disagree and instead warm up to the views of Jacob Talmon, who, writing in the early 1960s, blamed troubling alliances between philosophers and tyrants on primordial religious impulses that found an unexpected home in the irrational rationalism of the French Revolution and the extreme political ideologies it spawned. Finally, rather than opting for a history of ideas, a historically sensitive scholar might wish to examine the social and economic context of the intellectuals in question, thus exploring the link between personal choice and material incentive structures anchored in modern economic practices, increasing class conflict, and the growing imperialist ambitions of Western nation-states.

Ultimately, however, Lilla argues that these historical approaches fail to take us to the heart of the matter. As he puts it, “All these attitudes and tendencies obviously had their part in European history, whether as proximate causes or effects, but none tells us why intellectual philotyranny develops at all.” Case closed. The author is now ready to uncover the “deeper forces that draw the mind to tyranny.”

But, I am tempted to interject: not so fast. How can Lilla admit that political attitudes might be the result of proximate historical forces and simultaneously claim that history does not tell us anything about why intellectual philotyranny develops in the first place? Did I miss something? How does Lilla justify his sweeping conclusion? What are his criteria for distinguishing between what counts as “deep” or “shallow” forces? Unfortunately, the author never engages these questions. Having jettisoned history in this rather tricky fashion, he is now ready to identify “deep psychological forces” as the main culprits for the philosophers’ failings. According to Lilla, “love induces madness.” In other words, philotyrannical intellectuals like Heidegger and Foucault suffered from an overabundance of *eros*—the very force that drew them to philosophy in the first place. Unable to “master” the excessive erotic yearnings of their souls, these unfortunate creatures found themselves under the spell of a “blissful kind of madness” that manifested itself in their “reckless passion” to influence public life as teachers orators, and advisors to rulers. “Sunburned” by their immoderate ideas, philotyrannical intellectuals like Benjamin and Derrida “dive headlong into political discussion, writing books, giving speeches, offering advice in a frenzy of activity” that barely masks their “incompetence and irresponsibility.” Lacking humility and intellectual self-control, reckless

philosophers like Foucault and Kojève “whip the minds of the young into a frenzy.”

The final few paragraphs of Lilla’s afterword are rather predictable. Socrates understood this dangerous illness. Plato understood it. Dion understood it. As did Jaspers, Arendt, Aron, Strauss, and a number of other “responsible philosophers” whose moderation Lilla contrasts with the excesses of Heidegger, Foucault, & Co. Never mind that Socrates was seen by many of his contemporaries as a philotyrannical intellectual who whipped the minds of the young into a frenzy. Never mind that Plato himself repeatedly gave in to his erotic yearnings to advise a tyrant who showed little sign of moderation and self-control. Never mind that Dion desired to become the ruler of Syracuse himself—a passion so strong and reckless that it made him organize an ultimately unsuccessful coup d’état against his “dear friend” Dionysius. Never mind that Jaspers publicly supported dropping nuclear weapons on the Soviet Union. Never mind that Arendt endorsed racial segregation in Little Rock in the name of “democracy.”

Lilla, of course, judges the character and actions of his heroes very differently. In his view, Socrates’ educational enterprise of righting inverted souls was completely misunderstood by his fellow citizens; Plato’s repeated attempts to reform Dionysius—even against his better judgment—were but well-meaning acts of soul care, and fitting for a self-controlled sage of Plato’s caliber; and Dion merely sought to free Syracuse from an incorrigible tyrant “without letting the tyranny he combated enter his soul.” In the end, the author assures us, “There is no shame in failure or death in politics so long as one remains free of that tyranny. . . . Dion died a glorious death, loyal to truth and his city.”

How can Lilla be so certain that Dion’s soul remained pure? What, exactly, do we mean by “soul?” Is Plato’s simplistic tripartite division the best way of conceptualizing souls? Who is the most competent judge of people’s souls? What criteria should we use? What traits or actions should count as more significant than others? Who makes the selection? Who judges the judges’ judgment?

Lilla’s summary dismissal of historical approaches and his exclusive reliance on a rather reductionistic psychologism, points, in my view, to another form of intellectual recklessness that could reasonably be described as “psychotyranny.” This term signifies the spiritual arrogance and moral elitism

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of anointed soul experts who feel called upon to establish well-ordered souls and polities. It seems to me that such an excessive yearning for what they consider to be a “moderate” political order pervaded by a “sense of moral proportion” fueled both Plato’s real voyages to the tyrant of Syracuse and Mark Lilla’s literary speculations about the imagined souls of modern philotyrannical intellectuals.

Tim Luke

Review

*The End of Politics: Corporate Power
and the Decline of the Public Sphere* by Carl Boggs

Reviewed by
Tim W. Luke

During an era in which the President of the United States piously pronounces his support of a “compassionate conservatism,” while keeping a personal scorecard in his desk of all the fundamentalist Islamic terrorists that the CIA either successfully apprehends or eradicates, a book like Carl Boggs’s *The End of Politics* is sorely needed. Rather than rehashing strange claims about the falling levels of social capital as the source of today’s political malaise like in Robert Putnam’s highly feted *Bowling Alone*, Boggs documents the rise of a corporate capitalist culture and economy in the U.S. that rests on exploiting almost everyone together. While Putnam hides these forces in more nebulous factors, like “the media” or “the Internet,” Boggs comes straight at the problem in his pointed critique of today’s corporate culture. The election of George W. Bush to the presidency in 2000 simply underscores “the spreading national ethos” of anti-politics (pp.311-319) in early twenty-first century America that began in the 1970s with the gradual closure of the public sphere, a drop in popular political participation, and the erosion of traditional partisan alignments. For Boggs, all of these highly anti-political developments point toward “the end of politics.”

Boggs finds little to celebrate in Francis Fukuyama’s “end of history” thinking in the 1990s, and his critique also undercuts Daniel Bell’s “end of ideology” analysis from the 1950s. These earlier apologetic assessments of business civilization in the United States imagined much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ political projects fulfilled in America’s cultural, geopolitical, and technoscientific success during the Cold War. Boggs, however, disputes these celebratory dismissals of many Americans’ collective struggle. Instead, his engagé scholarship suggests that the overwhelming dominance of corporate power in today’s era of neoliberal globalization makes the revitalization of broadly-based, deeply-committed, and fully-

educated citizens' movements even more imperative, even though this will be much more difficult. Some might see his faith in a broadly-based popular sovereignty being borne out by everyday people rather than corporate political action committees, Astroturf movements, and not-for-profit think tanks as a downright romantic reading of both America's past and future. This cynical understanding, however, is superficial.

Boggs is a clear, careful, and consistent proponent of a genuine public sphere. Bringing a Gramscian "pessimism of the spirit, optimism of the will" to his treatment of contemporary American life, he argues that only real political revitalization can save the republic from its accelerating slide into economic stagnation and political fragmentation. As he traces out the logic of anti-politics through the depoliticization of society, the disarray of liberalism, the new corporate order, and economic globalization, Boggs also shows how the mass politics of the 1960s set the stage for today's depoliticization. His analysis worries openly about the anti-political qualities of economic globalization, the information revolution, and suburban sprawl, on the one hand, while, questioning, on the other hand, how localist resistances, radical ecologists, and postmodern critiques all have failed to gel into significant oppositional forces against the corporate order now underpinning the contemporary United States.

Boggs believes in the material possibilities for American revitalization. While things overall do not seem encouraging, his faith in positive developments (pp. 258-260) at the country's grassroots tied to new battles over healthcare, the environment, and foreign policy issues lead him to support new third-party alternatives to reopen public debate and redirect popular action in the immediate future. Of course, the questionable election in 2000 of President Bush is not encouraging; but, in many ways, it is another "morbid symptom" (p. 274) of the collapse of contemporary liberal/conservative politics and another sign of the need for change. September 11, 2001 roused some Americans out of their anti-political frame of mind, and Boggs's vision of an independent, antiliberal/cosmopolitan citizens' movements pressing for greater justice here and abroad is one that can stand as a guidepost for many during the present moment. In a social science discipline where other discussions about the "the end of politics" often become mired in obscure methodological feuds, and conservative stability-seeking remains by and large the order of the day, Boggs's book is a marvelous example of how intellectual craftsmanship and political critique can be effectively blended to do both

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“political science” and contribute to “real politics” at the same time. This book is a significant contribution to our understanding of how neoliberal corporate power had led to mass depoliticization, and it deserves to be widely read.