



EDITED BY CHARLES REITZ

CRISIS AND COMMONWEALTH

Marcuse, Marx, McLaren



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Charles Reitz

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Introduction

Crisis and Commonwealth—Politics, Pedagogy, Praxis

Charles Reitz

Today radical social change presupposes men and women who *not only* want production relations without exploitation—that is, a planned economy, the equal distribution of the social wealth—but also a life that is no longer spent in making a living—that is an end-in-itself, to be enjoyed in solidarity with other free human beings, and nature. . . . Now I suggest that such changes are actually going on. . . . In short, faith in the necessity, in the basic values of capitalism is crumbling.

—Herbert Marcuse, “Lecture on Higher Education and Politics, Berkeley, 1975” (2009b)

The inner dynamic of capitalism . . . necessitates the revival of the *radical* rather than the minimal goals of socialism.

—Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972, 5)

Global finance capital is in crisis. So too are the economic worlds of “the 99 percent” in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Now more than ever we must examine the conditions that perpetuate the increasingly stressed and volatile realities of our political, economic, and cultural lives. U.S.-led corporate globalization has intensified forms of class, race, and gender inequality, alienation, and cultural polarization worldwide. The global free trade economic “utopia” pursued since 1989 has shown itself to be openly vicious, predatory, and self-destructive. After the demise of the Eastern Bloc and Soviet Union, Wall Street unleashed a wild, triumphal gale of financial and real estate speculation reinscribing extremes of class division even within cultures whose internal conflicts had been thought to be reconciled. Globalization has led, paradoxically, to “worlds apart” (Sernau 2001),

both within and between nations. Austerity policies, centering on forms of structural adjustment, have reduced social-needs-oriented government spending while subsidizing banking and investment institutions. Today's social realities of economic meltdown and collapse may also create conditions for emancipation and liberation.

Herbert Marcuse's caustic condemnations of U.S. military aggression, its need for an "enemy," the irrationality of U.S. economic waste, destruction, and wealth distortions, etc., are particularly timely and deserve invigorated attention across this nation's campuses as well as in other cultural and political circles today. His philosophical vision, political critique, and social activism continue to offer intelligent strategic perspective on such current concerns as repressive democracy, political and racial inequality, education as social control, and the radical meaning of socialism—especially where issues of alienation, war, oppression, critical inquiry, critical media literacy, and civic/revolutionary action are involved. He maintained that the most important duty of the intellectual was to investigate destructive social circumstances—and be engaged in activities of transformation toward justice and peace (Marcuse [1975] 1987, 182).

The continuing power and ongoing relevance of Marcuse's critical theory of society is remarkable: over the past decade a veritable Marcuse Renaissance has occurred through many new scholarly publications and conferences. These include several volumes of his posthumous papers, critical engagements with his thought, political/biographical accounts, and educational philosophical essays, etc. A diverse and active group of younger as well as veteran Marcuse scholars has been meeting biannually since 2005 under the auspices of the International Herbert Marcuse Society. About forty papers from the last conference at the University of Pennsylvania have been published in 2013 in a special Marcuse issue of the *Radical Philosophy Review*. Douglas Kellner (2011) in the United States and Peter-Erwin Jansen (2009) in Germany have, separately, published multiple volumes of hitherto unpublished Marcuse materials. Other recent books have included: Kevin B. Anderson and Russell Rockwell (2012) on the correspondence between Herbert Marcuse and Raya Dunayevskaya; Luis Gustavo Guadalupe Silveira (2010) on artistic alienation and Marcuse's politics (in Portuguese), as well as Tim B. Müller (2010) on Marcuse and the cold war (in German), and Arnold L. Farr (2009) on Marcuse and recent liberation philosophies. Douglas Kellner, working with co-editors Tyson Lewis and Clayton Pierce, has published *On Marcuse: Critique, Liberation, and Reschooling in the Radical Pedagogy of Herbert Marcuse* (2008), and with K. Daniel Cho this Kellner group has brought out hitherto unpublished Marcuse manuscripts and analytical essays in *Marcuse's Challenge to Education* (2009). Recently there was also Christian Fuchs's (2005) intercultural reading of Marcuse, Andrew Feenberg's (2005) analysis of the Heidegger-Marcuse relationship, as well as Richard

Wolin's and John Abromeit's (2005) republication of the early Marcuse essays reflective of his Heideggerian Marxism. In 2004, *Herbert Marcuse: A Critical Reader* appeared with papers from a 1998 conference at UC Berkeley commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Marcuse's birth, edited by John Abromeit and W. Mark Cobb.

How would Herbert Marcuse look at our epoch: post-1989, post-9/11, post-Recession? Essays in *Crisis and Commonwealth* will furnish an assessment of contemporary political-economic conditions in order to re-frame and reconstruct, through the dialectical methodologies of critical theory, keener insights into the generative mechanisms that undergird intensifying inequality, alienation, cultural polarization, and war. The distinctive quality of the present effort is that it wishes to oppose the intensely precarious crisis conditions today and to propose a commonwealth counter-offensive.

Contributors to this collection, perhaps most notably Peter Marcuse, Zvi Tauber (2012), and Arnold L. Farr (2009), as well as Henry A. Giroux (1983) and Peter McLaren (with Nathalia Jaramillo 2010, 2007), have long been critically engaged with the foundational theories of Herbert Marcuse. So too have I (Reitz 2009a, 2009b, 2000). Peter Marcuse and Arnold L. Farr will contribute their latest essays on Marcuse's contemporary political-philosophical pertinence. Authors in *Crisis and Commonwealth* will explore in particular the potentials and powers of human labor, leadership, and learning, as they grapple with the critical intellectual traditions of Marcuse and Marx.

POLITICS OF PREDATION AND COUNTERREVOLUTION

It was Marcuse who, forty years ago, first warned of the global economic and cultural developments that are now much more obvious given capitalism's crescendo of economic failures since 2008. Political and philosophical tendencies that are often referred to as "neoliberalism" and/or "neoconservatism" in much analytical work today, Marcuse clearly understood back then as *organized counterrevolution* (Marcuse 1972; [1975] 1987). He saw this political development as a preemptive strike undertaken by an increasingly predatory capitalism against liberal democratic change, not to mention the radical opposition ([1975] 1987, 172).

The Western world has reached a new stage of development: now, the defense of the capitalist system requires the organization of counterrevolution at home and abroad. . . . Torture has become a normal instrument of 'interrogation' around the world. . . . [E]ven Liberals are not safe if they appear as too liberal. (Marcuse 1972, 1)

Not very long ago the news media brought us disclosures almost daily about the U.S. military's use of torture and prisoner abuse (Abu Ghraib,

Guantánamo), civilian massacres and war crimes (Fallujah, Haditha), and the loaded intelligence that the U.S. Defense Department desired as a pretext for the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Gore Vidal's *Dreaming War: Blood for Oil and the Cheney-Bush Junta* (2002) is a stunning indictment of the imperialist nature of U.S. foreign and military policy. "For fifty years we have supported too many tyrants, overthrown too many democratic governments, wasted too much of our own money in other people's civil wars, to pretend that we're just helping out all those poor little folks around the world who love freedom and democracy just like we do" (Vidal 2002, 125). It should be noted today that Vidal's assessment stands in sharp contrast to the ostensibly radical, postmodernist positions of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 2009). These authors have offered what might have been exciting works on empire, economic crisis, and commonwealth, yet the potentially significant insights that their writing supplies on one page, it takes away with the next. For example: "Empire is the political subject . . . , the sovereign power that governs the world" (2000, xi), yet "*The United States does not, and indeed no nation state can today, form the center of an imperialist project. Imperialism is over*" (2000, xiv; emphasis in original).

In Chapter 1, Stephen Spartan and I build upon Marcuse's and Marx's philosophy of labor in part as a countervailing force to the recent work of Hardt and Negri. Caught up in postmodern modes of expression, productive labor in their view is said now to have a "tendency to become increasingly immaterial. . . . [S]urplus value is today increasingly filled by intellectual, immaterial, and communicative labor power" (2000, 29). Similarly: "Socialism and capitalism . . . are both regimes of property that exclude the common" (2009, ix), yet "[l]anguage . . . is for the most part common" (2009, ix). Spartan and I recoil at the *de-realization* and *de-materialization* inherent in this postmodern antifoundationism (see also Neumann 2008, 183–198). While it is true that intellectual and technological ingenuity has modernized just about everything, the economic applications of them continue to be governed by the forces of capitalism and its fetish with commodity production. Increased communicative power has facilitated globalized labor arbitrage, financial speculation, and consumerism leading to workforce immiseration, environmental destruction, and ongoing militarism.

Increasing exploitation is occurring today through the "race to the bottom" as global capitalism scours the world for the lowest wage labor markets and presses domestic labor for steep cuts. Policies of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) have led to structural adjustments that exemplify "policies of external domination that hurt the poor" (Sernau 2001, 36). In the U.S. the current recovery, devoid of job growth, is a further indicator of a distorted political economy in which taxpayer/government subsidies to finance capital

have permitted a redistribution of wealth to the advantage of the largest banks and high income individuals—reducing the global payroll.

Stephen Spartan and I therefore address the over-appropriation crisis of U.S. capitalism today and develop a political-economic model of capital accumulation and workforce remuneration to obtain a critical theoretical perspective. The structure and dynamics of the value production process are made visible here in their material form. We see the over-appropriation of capital and the intensifying maldistribution of wealth in the U.S. as grounded in these relationships and at the root of the system's recurring recessions and economic depressions.

Real structured interconnection exists in our economic lives. Theory may be called critical *only* if it penetrates beneath empirical economic facts and discerns generative economic, social, and cultural structures that are neither obvious nor apparent. A central focus of this volume is building an emancipatory vision for labor, including academic labor. The recent global economic dislocations demand a re-thinking of critical theory with greater focus on issues of our economic alienation and dehumanization, the powers of our common work and common wealth, and the rehumanization of world politics.

Our analysis in Chapter 1 focuses on the complex and pivotal underlying structures of economic oppression and exploitation that are too often overlooked (sometimes actively suppressed) by analysts, policy makers, commentators, and educators when examining both the causes and the impacts of imperial corporate globalization. Our purpose is essentially pedagogical: to provide suggestions for inclusion in lesson plans that can help students understand the origins of economic inequality, the nature of capitalism's recurring crises, and the socialist logic of commonwealth production and ownership. We do this through a discussion of patterns of wealth and income distribution and other specific examples that can be intellectually and politically powerful tools for teachers in several interrelated disciplines—political science, sociology, economics, history, and ethics, as well as logic and critical thinking. We hope to mobilize students, faculty, and the general public to root out the conditions, educational and otherwise, that serve to perpetuate the undemocratic realities of political and cultural life (including neocolonial terror wars) deriving from the capitalist world's unfair and unequal social division of labor and wealth. We point out that realigning the social order to conform with the highest potentials of our economy and human nature requires the decommodification of certain social resources: health care, child care, education, food, transportation, housing—and the decommodification of work itself, through a guaranteed income policy.

Peter Marcuse's essay "Socialism One Sector at a Time" corroborates the view that capitalist crises are rooted in the contradictory features of the economic system itself, and underscores the above suggestions regarding the

strategy of decommodification. He acknowledges the radical energies that were expressed in the wide-spread, often student-led, protests of the 1960s. These included the militant actions on the streets of Paris and in universities there as well as in the United States. The contemporary movements of late 2011 and today, represented by the Occupy Wall Street actions and the present Right to the City Movement, are also understood as having potentially transformative qualities. Yet, in his view, revolution in the classic Marxist sense is not on the agenda anywhere today. Therefore, he proposes a sector by sector approach as a necessary transition to the more radical goals for social change that Herbert Marcuse envisaged. The decommodification of the labor process and the entire economy will make possible a more encompassing sphere of human liberation and human flourishing. The writings and speeches of Peter Marcuse's father, before, during, and after the 1960s, are seen as having a direct relevance to what the possibilities for radically targeted actions and goals might be today.

The crisis conditions which afflict the U.S. economy at the present time need to be understood not only in terms of predatory financialization dynamics but also as *a war on labor*. David Brodsky's essay (this volume, Chapter 3) describes the current form adopted by this war in the U.S. as a campaign to remove collective bargaining rights, and thus labor unions, from the public sector. *Charter 2000* is introduced as a call for labor to make gains, rather than preserve its status quo, and for academic labor to restore substance and service to the common good in higher education. The labor issues raised here are equally relevant to students, because they are future workers or already hold down jobs, and they apply across the curriculum.

The full text of *Charter 2000* (<http://progressiveplatform2000.org/Charter-2000-Platform.htm>) should be considered at this historical juncture to arm ourselves with both a common-ground political platform and a practical tool kit that can open up useful political front lines on a number of reformist as well as revolutionary issues. As Marcuse observed in 1972: "Radicalism has much to gain from the 'legitimate' protest against the war, inflation, and unemployment, from the defense of civil rights. . . . The ground for the building of a united front is shifting and sometimes dirty—but it is there" (1972, 56). Kellner (2005, 32) notes: "Marcuse's use of the term 'united front' serves as a rhetorical device which makes it appear that a coalition of democratic-populist groups may be the most promising force for developing a revolutionary movement in the United States." *Charter 2000's* core is a highly detailed program for what will doubtless still be a long term project of discussion and organization as we start to rethink the shape of human society. Its compendium of universal rights and entitlements helps us re-imagine labor's humanist future. *Charter 2000* is unique among U.S. progressive platforms and programs in its focus on universal human rights, especially social, economic, and cultural rights, which are excluded from the

U.S. Constitution and slighted in statutory law. It is also unique in its insistence that U.S. democracy must expand to embrace these universal human rights, which it calls democratic outcomes, and that they be guaranteed through constitutional amendments.

Labor rights are human rights. Labor rights enumerated in *Charter 2000* include the right to a job with a living income, a guaranteed income for those without jobs, and several dozen others. In addition, *Charter 2000* declares positive motivations, social and personal, to be the basic incentive for employment; supports fair trade; and envisions an abundant society enjoyed by all. Its proposals are in the interest of all people who must work for a living, and those dependent on them—in other words, everyone except the privileged classes. In the face of the global war on labor, it is high time for working people to mount a counter-offensive. Recent general strikes in Spain and Greece are vivid testimony to the need for a transitional program which represents the interests of all ordinary people.

Following the economic crisis of 2008, and the debacle of the 2010 elections, Fred Whitehead developed a call for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing employment, and circulated it to a wide range of progressive and Left organizations and influential individuals. Though the call was published on one or two websites, it fell on stony ground, which provided evidence of a broad failure of strategic thinking on the Left. Lessons from this failure are discussed in some detail, illustrating the continued need for courage, vision, and concrete programs for action in his chapter “‘Vote for a Job’—A Short History of Contemporary Strategic Failure on the Organized Left, with Lessons for the Present.”

Douglas Dowd, along with Leo Huberman, Paul Baran, and Paul Sweezy, is one of the “deans” of radical political economy in the U.S. who, after World War II, shaped the views of critical educators of the next generation. As professor of economics at Cornell University, Dowd was a campus leader there (along with physicist Philip Morrison) in movements against the war in Vietnam and against racism in the still-segregated South. Dowd’s contribution to this volume, written from his retirement in Bologna, Italy, at age 93, deals with the current themes of the crisis of U.S. capitalism and militarism and our political work today. Dowd presents an historical perspective on the “insanity and injustice of industrial capitalism as the twentieth century unfolded” and its “endless militarism.” This analysis undergirds his call for coordinated, programmatic, and *radical* action in six key areas today: the economy, inequality, big business, taxes, militarism, and the environment.

John Marciano made his mark in the dialectics of liberation and learning by confronting the facts constituting what I call “the American Pageant” version of the high school history curriculum in Marcusean fashion with “the realities those facts deny.” His *Teaching the Vietnam War*, co-authored with his colleague Bill Griffen, elicited educationally productive waves of cogni-

tive dissonance among teacher education students and their instructors charged with comparing and questioning clashing accounts of that war. Similarly, he shares with us in this volume his guidelines and scholarly sources on “Empire as a Way of Life” furnishing a no-nonsense tutorial designed to empower teachers and others to engage in what Freire calls a directed dialogue on the history and ostensible rationale of U.S. war-making and empire-building. Reporter Ron Susskind described a 2004 interview with George W. Bush adviser Karl Rove, in which Rove discounts the reporter’s adherence to “reality-based” study. According to Rove: “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality . . . we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do” (Susskind in Danner 2012, 86).

Marciano’s course outline and reading list are resources proven to have generated animated and critical discussion among students, faculty, and the public at large. They examine the historical contours and patterns of the economic and political dimensions of U.S. foreign policy. I include Marciano’s concise and straight-forward approach here as an antidote to the excesses and confusions of Hardt and Negri on these topics. Marciano’s curriculum is particularly strong because he recalls the classic scholarship of William Appleman Williams, Gabriel Kolko, and Michael Parenti.

Hardt and Negri invite us in *Empire* to learn of the contemporary relevance of an understanding of the political strengths of ancient Rome as seen from Machiavelli’s perspective. Inspired by Polybius of antiquity they tell us, Machiavelli saw the Roman Empire as a mixture of monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic power (2000, 163, 314–316). Certain unnamed political thinkers in the U.S. then drew upon Machiavelli’s understanding of imperial Rome as a source for constitutionally institutionalizing the three branches of a republican government as it was being founded. They further contend: “It seems to us that in certain respects the original ancient Polybian model of the constitution of Empire is closer to our reality than the modern liberal tradition’s transformation of it” (2000, 316). In other words, while they acknowledge we now have a “post-modern Empire,” we have “no Rome” (2000, 317). In contrast, I include in this volume a noteworthy early study by Stephen Spartan utilizing key methodological categories of critical political economy (social formations, state formations, modes of privilege, etc. as developed by Perry Anderson and Nicos Poulantzas) to understand more adequately the contemporary relevance of the crises of the Western Roman Empire in terms of our analogous problems of over-accumulation and the non-reproduction of the U.S. mode of production.

Douglas Kellner denounces U.S. empire-building and the nation’s post-9/11 warmongering, false patriotism, and media propaganda:

[T]he Bush administration manipulated the September 11 terror attacks to push through a hard-right domestic agenda. . . . I am using the term “Terror War” to describe the Bush administration’s “war against terror” and its use of aggressive military force and terror as the privileged vehicles of constructing a U.S. hegemony in the current world (dis)order. . . . The right wing of the Bush administration seeks to promote Terror War as the defining struggle of the era, coded as an apocalyptic battle between good and evil. (Kellner 2003, 6–7)

Such policies are sometimes resisted by a variety of forces. When armed insurrection is involved, these movements are frequently labeled “terrorist.” Chalmers Johnson (2000, 2004) has argued that the U.S. military’s approximately 700 bases around the world serve primarily to extend the economic global hegemony of this country. Operations that have sought to secure this hegemony abroad have led to forms of violent resistance he called “blow-back.” Because these military operations have been kept secret from the U.S. public, it does not have the context to understand these dynamics, and views attacks, like 9/11, with incomprehension and as certainly unprovoked.

In addition to his contributions to critical political and economic theory, Herbert Marcuse deserves to be recognized as a practitioner/theorist of radical pedagogy, paving the way decades ago for some of today’s most eloquent and critical educational theorists: Henry Giroux, bell hooks, Peter McLaren, Douglas Kellner, and others, including of course Angela Davis. These writers bring to bear critical pedagogy’s most radical elements in a variety of ways.

REVOLUTIONARY CRITICAL PEDAGOGY: PETER McLAREN

Peter McLaren asks educators, first and foremost, to “take the struggle over the social division of labor as seriously as we do the struggle over meaning and representation” (McLaren 1997, 13). “As it stands, the major purpose of education is to make the world safe for global capitalism. . . . [R]evolutionary educators *refuse* the role that global capitalism has assigned to them: to become the supplicants of corporate America and to work at the behest of the corporate bottom line” (McLaren 2000, 196–197 emphasis added). He turns our attention toward capitalism’s incompatibility with democracy, and combines a critique of the logic of capital accumulation and global predation with a critique of schooling as a mechanism of social control and the reproduction of the unequal social division of labor. McLaren’s stress on the *refusals* required of the revolutionary critical educator derives from Marcuse’s concept of the “Great Refusal” (Marcuse [1955] 1966, 149).

McLaren presents in this volume a *Manifesto* for socialist teaching. This sets the stage for a capstone reflection essay by Jodi Dean, “The Communist Horizon.” Though McLaren and Dean utilize slightly different vocabularies,

I present their writing, philosophy, and politics in close proximity. I believe they would agree with me that their usage of the words “socialist” and “communist” has an underlying identity in the powers of partnership, labor, and commonwealth. Henry Giroux’s trenchant criticisms of education and culture also serve as a backdrop for other radical voices included in this diverse collection: those of Patricia Pollock Brodsky and Arnold L. Farr. The work of each of these authors can assist importantly in the advance from minimal to radical educational goals.

Henry A. Giroux’s chapter, “Can Democratic Education Survive in a Neoliberal Society?” sees public education as having come under assault by a host of religious, economic, ideological and political fundamentalists. The most serious attack is being waged by advocates of neoliberalism, whose reform efforts focus narrowly on high-stakes testing, traditional texts and memorization drills. At the heart of this approach is an aggressive attempt to disinvest in public schools, replace them with charter schools, and remove state and federal governments completely from public education in order to allow education to be organized and administered by market-driven forces. Schools would “become simply another corporate asset bundled in credit default swaps,” valuable for their rate of exchange and trade value on the open market. Like Marcuse, he sees neoliberalism as a form of counterrevolution. In opposition to the privatization, commodification, commercialization and militarization of everything public, educators need to define public education as a resource vital to the democratic and civic life of the nation. Giroux (2006, 2005) refers to this series of events as constituting a new dark age, with a “New Authoritarianism” putting “America at the Edge.” In this volume Giroux drives home how hedge funds place big bets with other people’s money and can topple an entire economic system into crisis; how the discourse of privatization, deregulation, and commodification has displaced consideration of the public good; how the sovereignty of the rich and the defense industry has destroyed democracy; how the neoliberal framing of educational philosophy, especially in corporate-oriented higher education, turns education’s humanistic traditions into job preparation regimes.

Patricia Pollock Brodsky has titled her contribution: “Defeating Corporate Blueprints, White Papers, and Blue Ribbon Task Forces: Academic Labor Reclaims Public Higher Education for the Public.” From 2000 through autumn 2005, faculty at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), a medium-sized public urban institution, faced a series of relentless attacks on academic freedom, faculty governance, and the public status of the university. In response to this multi-pronged attempt to corporatize and privatize UMKC, faculty, students, and the community together mounted a successful defense of public higher education. The author was a member of the UMKC faculty and an officer of its AAUP advocacy chapter that led the fight. Herbert Marcuse writes that “students and teachers [must] take control of the

means of intellectual production: the university.” At UMKC faculty and students reclaimed control of the “means of production” and in the process overcame a longstanding campus culture of complacency and apathy. They put into practice principles of education expounded in *Charter 2000: A Comprehensive Political Platform*—the author was one of the platform’s drafters—education as a universal human right serving the public good and laying the foundation of an informed democracy. This history of the victory at UMKC serves as an example of what can be achieved when people work together aggressively to protect and advance public education.

Arnold L. Farr also confronts educational philosophical issues in an essay on emancipatory and repressive features of schooling. Unequal material resources result in unequal life chances for children in class and race terms. Repressive educational mechanisms are not total, and they do not completely suffocate the critical spirit. Yet liberalism in educational theory and practice, and in the curriculum, tends to extinguish radical alternatives. Rawls’s theory of justice is soundly critiqued as providing an appealing cover for a theory that refuses to investigate, much less root out, the existing sources of class- and race-based oppression. Kozol in contrast *does* investigate the underlying inequalities and injustices and suggest solutions. Farr develops Marcuse’s insight that the existing circumstances, options, and rhetoric, are fixed, doctored, loaded. Real education requires an intellectual and historical recontextualization of the facts with what the facts have denied: the histories of oppression that have themselves precluded social equality and social justice. The traditional German concept of *Bildung* is presented as an emancipatory form of education. By building a multidimensional context for interpretation, a classical education in the liberal arts and sciences can perform a subversive function vis-à-vis traditionally conservative curricular content. The dialectical dimensions of *Bildung* can undergird radical political action for freedom and equality insofar as it does not allow the prevailing group’s reading of a society’s formative processes to be the only or dominant reading.

MARCUSE ON EMANCIPATORY GENERAL EDUCATION

Herbert Marcuse’s initial cultural impact in the U.S. was connected closely to the intellectual and political, campus-based turmoil of the 1960s, and was related to his influence on the theory and practice of the global student movement and his assessment of key issues in higher education. Yet his theoretical contributions to U.S. higher education have seldom been taken up as a research project. In an earlier essay I outlined an approach to critical pedagogy, called “EduAction” (for social science teachers in community college settings, but applicable elsewhere), which several of my colleagues and I sought to implement in our own teaching. This EduAction perspective

(Reitz 2002) was inspired by and built upon some of Marcuse's most brilliant and biting criticisms. A few years ago I came across two documents in the Marcuse Archive at Frankfurt each of which reads like a contemporary manifesto of educational philosophy and politics (Reitz 2000, 191, 246). These materials have been published for the first time in *Marcuse's Challenge to Education* (edited by Douglas Kellner, Tyson Lewis, Clayton Pierce, and K. Daniel Cho) as "Lecture on Education, Brooklyn College, 1968" (Marcuse 2009a) and "Lecture on Higher Education and Politics, Berkeley, 1975" (Marcuse 2009b). The former lecture is an assessment of general education and its relationship to social change. In it Marcuse confronts the ideals of U.S. general education with its social reality. Education is "*not* general even today" (2009a, 33). Access to general education, he says, remains confined to the privileged few and is an upper class phenomenon, not only because it is an expression of underlying structures of social inequality, but because it contains a potentially dangerous critical dimension. In the existing U.S. social order, general education tends to be socially and institutionally restricted because of "the 'subversive' element" (2009a, 33) in this education. In theoretical education "knowledge, intelligence, reason are catalysts of social change. They lead to the projection of the possibilities of a 'better' order; violation of socially useful taboos, illusions" (2009a, 33–34). Opposition to this form of general theoretical education arises "from below *and* from above" due to a deeply seated anti-intellectualism in U.S. history and culture. Marcuse stressed that reform efforts toward general education were gaining momentum back in 1968, and this was occurring

on a very *material basis*: the need of industrial society to increase the supply of skilled workers and employees, especially the need for scientists, technicians, etc. for the efficient development of the productive forces and their apparatus and, more recently, the need for psychologists and sociologists for analyzing and projecting and stimulating economic and political demand. (2009a, 34)

In the intervening years since Marcuse addressed the material forces impelling U.S. education toward a new emphasis on the general and the theoretical, the world has witnessed the full-fledged coming of the information age and the ascendancy of the Internet and electronic technologies for information processing. We have also seen the resurgence of a culturally counterrevolutionary general education movement in the U.S. with the advent of the culture wars in the mid-1980s under Reagan. This continues in contemporary neoconservatism. Marcuse stressed nonetheless that the social dynamics at work in higher education have a dialectical character: they require that education must permit (for some) unrestricted access to high quality knowledge in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences in order to be competitive in the global economic market and to guide the political cultures of

nations in a sophisticated manner. Yet education must also shield this information-based global society against radical change. Marcuse anticipated in *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972) the now raging tendencies, on the one hand, to reinsinuate an elitist program for the liberal arts in American general education against the critical impulses within it. On the other hand, general education was also being increasingly displaced by vocationalism. In Marcuse's view:

To create the subjective conditions for a free society [it is] no longer sufficient to educate individuals to perform more or less happily the functions they are supposed to perform *in this society* or extend 'vocational' education to the 'masses.' Rather . . . [we must] . . . educate men and women who are incapable of tolerating what is going on, who have really learned what *is* going on, has always been going on, and why, and who are educated to resist and to fight for a new way of life.

By its own inner dynamic, education thus *leads beyond the classroom*, beyond the university, *into the political dimension*, and into the *moral, instinctual dimension*. (2009a, 35, emphasis in original)

Teachers and students in the liberal arts and sciences were admonished to be critically engaged with the materials under study, and to "*become partisan, that is, against oppression, moronization, brutalization*" (2009a, 38). These themes were reiterated at Berkeley a few years later with an emphasis on community impact projects outside the university as well:

To attain our goal, we need *knowledge*. It is still true that *theory* is the guide of radical practice. *We need history* because we need to know how it came about that civilization is what it is today: where it went wrong. And we need the history not only of the victors, but also of the victims. *We need a sociology* which can show us where the real power is that shapes the social structure. *We need economics* which are not "sublimated" to mathematics. *We need science* in order to reduce toil, pain, disease, and to restore nature. It is still to a great extent up to you to get such teaching and learning, to insist on the "missing courses" and persons, on class discussion and criticism, and the like.

And *outside* the university? "Community work," based on grass roots discontent is easily ridiculed by the super-radicals as "social work" for the Establishment. But under the counterrevolution, and in the present situation of monopoly capitalism, what was formerly harmless becomes increasingly intolerable for the power structure. The space for concessions increasingly narrows! And there is still room for *political* activity. A resumption of the tradition of the sixties: boycotts, pickets, *demonstrations*, against the brutal support of fascist regimes, the policy of soaking the poor, racism and sexism, and the destruction of our life environment. Demonstrations at the right time and on concrete issues! (2009b, 43)

Catalyst groups of students and faculty within higher education institutions have quite remarkably moved educational theory and practice forward in recent decades, especially through the anti-racist and anti-sexist multicultural education reform movement. My own chapters in the body of this collection connect these multicultural trends to Marcuse's labor-based humanism and his radical approaches to education in the humanities. I recover Marcuse's philosophy of labor from its relative obscurity, and defend his view that labor's felt needs insist upon the political movement from the minimal to the radical goals of socialism. I also develop a labor theory of ethical action and commonwealth and show how this undergirds Marcuse's desire to rehumanize the labor process and our very mode of existence.

Inspiration for my view of ethics and my notion of commonwealth came from Zvi Tauber's essay in this volume, "Art as Manifestation of the Struggle for Human Liberation." I hasten to add that I speak for myself alone in drawing implications from Tauber for the philosophy of socialist humanism that I find congenial.

Tauber suggests a trans-historical approach to historical-materialism that may be applied to art. According to this view, based on Marcuse's *The Aesthetic Dimension* (1978), art—great art—expresses the trans-historical, essential elements of human experience. Art uses, of course, specific-historical images and concepts, but it points aesthetically always to the essentially problematic, "unresolvable" situations of human beings as such. Art is a non-affirmative, negating element of ideology, which exposes the hidden truth and inner-contradictions of material reality in the history of humankind. Its negating character is concentrated first and foremost in its aesthetic qualities, rather than in its thematic (specific-historical) images and contents. In this sense art takes part in the trans-historical, socio-political struggle for human emancipation, and preserves its relevance throughout different historical epochs.

Alfred Taligoola Kisubi also addresses enduring aspects of culture that have given rise to early humanity's ethics of mutuality, responsibility, and sharing. Commonwealth principles were given voice in Africa's earliest folktales and proverbs, and these emerged from human society's earliest cooperative approaches to economics which sustained ancient communal social life. These principles also form the cultural origins of twentieth-century political humanism and socialism in Africa.

The 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., was a brutal act of political suppression and repression. Lloyd C. Daniel argues persuasively that even the wide-spread *celebration* of the life of Dr. King today has become a ritual of repression and suppression, in effect a "second assassination of Dr. King." A murder of the *memory* of MLK Jr. is said to occur when his real legacy of radicalism on issues of U.S. militarism, economic exploitation, and anti-racism is displaced in the mainstream media, schools, and

churches by attempts to make him over as if he were a Rodney King (“Can’t we all just get along?”) or a mainstream military leader like Colin Powell. We must read what King said, Daniel argues, and acknowledge that he disrupted harmony in the name of justice. King has been mythologized into just another mainstream democratic politician. If he were just that, Daniel writes, he’d be alive today to go on giving mainstream advice: “No, they had to kill the brother.” Herbert Marcuse shared MLK, Jr.’s criticisms of U.S. militarism, exploitation, and racism. Likewise, he made a political move that prefigured the robust and critical African American perspective presented here by Lloyd C. Daniel when he demanded a shift from minimal political goals to radical ones.

How profoundly the 2011 Arab revolutions have shaken the world is pointed out by Kevin B. Anderson in “Year Two of the Arab Revolutions.” They toppled three deeply rooted dictatorships—in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya—in a battle not only for democracy, but also one that raised issues of economic and social justice while attacking neoliberal capitalism. Moreover, they touched off a year of upheaval, from Wisconsin to Spain, and from London to Wall Street. Tunisia’s youth, women, and workers sparked the new era of revolution with lightning speed with their January 2011 overthrow of an entrenched dictatorial regime. Anderson cautions us, however, that in practice dialectics teaches that there is no progress without contradiction. Hence, there was much dismay, not only among their international supporters, but also among Arab revolutionaries themselves, when Islamist parties won big electoral victories in post-revolutionary Tunisia and Egypt, and seemed poised to do well in Libya as well. Even though Islamist politics had not dominated the 2011 revolutions themselves, in their aftermath Islamist parties and movements possessed both a cohesion and a clear sense of purpose lacking in the more secular and leftist groupings. At the same time, Anderson makes it clear that, over the past year, there has been a continued articulation of a more secular and leftist politics, whether on the streets or in some of the election returns, both in Egypt and Tunisia. Anderson recounts the recent history of these Arab revolutions with attention to a level of detail that has eluded many progressive observers. His analytical strength is in his critical examination of the complexities that test and expose contradictions on the left, as secular and labor forces contend with others in a vast regional revolution that has yet to run its course.

Peter McLaren sees revolutionary critical pedagogy as a necessary (albeit insufficient) vehicle for transforming the world. In his chapter “Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy for a Socialist Society: A Manifesto,” he addresses all of us whose life and work and future are subject to the power of predatory capital and finance. His emphasis is on the collective power we have to overcome the inimical forces of capitalism. In this essay he rejects the false alternative of choosing between a liberal model of pleading with corporations

to limit their cruelty and greed, and the reactionary model that has declared war on social and economic equality. McLaren advocates the socialist visions of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire, emphasizing the rehumanization of the entire sphere of society and culture as well as production processes.

Jodi Dean understands the capitalist *system* as a material force. At the same time she emphasizes that capitalism—as a global system of appropriation, exploitation and circulation, enriching the few as it dispossesses the many—can anger, incite, and galvanize. In her estimation the most powerful weapon the oppressed can wield in this contemporary political conflict is the revolutionary ideal of communism as the name for emancipatory, egalitarian politics. The communist horizon calls for militant opposition, tight organizational forms (working groups, parties) and stands or falls on its ability to inspire large scale collective struggle toward radical rather than social democratic goals. She argues that because the illusion that capitalism works has been shattered, “The Communist Horizon” is closer than it has been in a long time.

WORKFORCE COMMONWEALTH

The business utopian model of the U.S. economy is returning us to the 1880s and Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*. Aside from the politically hard-pressed public employee unions in Ohio and Wisconsin, who speaks for labor today? The Occupy Movement captured the nation’s imagination by standing up to Wall Street and holding the financial district responsible for most of the poverty and suffering on the planet. So too did the recent uprising in Madrid and the massive demonstrations and general strike in Athens against the austerity budgeting required by its biggest public and private creditors, i.e., the European Central Bank, and other national banks (Germany’s in particular) mediated through the IMF. Synchronized workforce actions, like the general strike of November 14, 2012, that have linked the opposition in Spain and Greece with forces in Italy, Portugal, Belgium, and France challenge the notion of the loss of the revolutionary subject. The demonstrators have connected with the key power base: labor. Yet these challenges must grow from revolt to revolution. The workforce is *the resource* with programmatic power. It is *the* creative force in the economy. *Everything* depends on labor. Yet today labor is supervised by finance capital. Marx and Marcuse emphasized that, in and of itself, labor has the capacity to act freely. Labor occurs in social relationships, and it is a communal project of social beings to meet human needs and promote human flourishing. Our common work is the source of our common wealth. Only the labor force, as a group, has a legitimate right to own this economic resource and to the political leadership of the commonwealth upon which it is built.

The Appendix to this volume publishes for the first time four almost forgotten manuscripts by Herbert Marcuse on value theory (1936), humanism (1962), the radical form of socialism he contends makes earlier forms of socialist thinking “obsolete” (1965), and his (1975) address on political action for freedom, equality, justice, peace, and the feasibility of a socialist future: “The very achievements of capitalism have brought about its obsolescence *and* the possibility of *the alternative!*”

Herbert Marcuse’s overarching critical theory, his classic writings, as well as those that are less familiar and brought to the fore in this volume, are a substantive lever to the commonwealth transformation the world today requires.

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Chapter One

The Political Economy of Predation and Counterrevolution

Recalling Marcuse on the Radical Goals of Socialism

Charles Reitz and Stephen Spartan

Corporate globalization is intensifying social inequality and cultural polarization worldwide. Increasing globalization correlates directly with growing inequality both within and between nations (Sernau 2001, 52–55). This global polarization and growing immiseration have brought to an end what Herbert Marcuse (1964) theorized in *One Dimensional Man* as the totally integrated and completely administered political universe of the liberal welfare/warfare state. Neoliberalism has replaced this “comfortable, smooth, democratic unfreedom” (Marcuse 1964, 1) with something more openly vicious. Peter McLaren (1997, 2) and others call it predatory culture: “Predatory culture is the left-over detritus of bourgeois culture stripped of its arrogant pretense to civility and cultural lyricism and replaced by a stark obsession with power fed by the voraciousness of capitalism’s global voyage.” Michael Apple (2001, 18) describes it as “capitalism with the gloves off.” David Korten (1995, 195) writes similarly of predatory finance: “The global economy is not, however, a healthy economy. In all too many instances it rewards *extractive* investors who do not create wealth, but simply extract and concentrate existing wealth. The extractive investor’s gain is at the expense of other individuals or the society at large.”

Marcuse, called this new stage *counterrevolution* (1972, 1987), and stressed the necessity of addressing anew the radical goals of socialism. We will elaborate these insights as this chapter unfolds. But first we need to look more deeply into the causes and consequences of capitalist inequality in its

historical and political context. Douglas Dowd's *Inequality and the Global Economic Crisis* (2009) offers a systematic overview:

Capitalism is, and must be, not only an economic but also a political and social system whose processes go well beyond production and trade for profit. . . . Britain was the first to seek and achieve the necessary depth and breadth of the processes *systemic* to capitalism: 1) expansion, 2) exploitation, and 3) oligarchic rule. . . . The interaction of capitalism's "imperatives" has inexorably produced intermittent crises and threats to its very survival, most destructively the socio-economic upheavals and wars of the twentieth century. (Dowd 2009, 11)

The imperative of exploitation is intensifying today through the "race to the bottom" as capitalism searches the globe for the lowest wage labor markets. Inequalities of income and wealth have been increasing over the last three decades in the United States, a tendency established well before the current economic fiasco in the banking and real estate industries. As we shall see, middle-range households have lost the most. In large part this is the toll of capitalist globalization, while in November 2010 U.S. corporations reported their best quarter ever, after seven consecutive quarters at the highest rates of growth in history.¹ Clearly this rate could not endure,² but following decades of labor speedup,³ the jobless recovery continues to facilitate enormous amounts of capital accumulation⁴ and the intensification of poverty.⁵ As reported front page by *The New York Times* March 4, 2013, "Recovery in the U.S. Lifting Profits, Not Adding Jobs; Wall Street is Buoyant." Its author, Nelson D. Schwartz, reports "the split between American workers and the companies that employ them is widening. . . . 'So far in this recovery, corporations have captured an unusually high share of the income gains' said Ethan Harris, co-head of global economics at Bank of America Merrill Lynch."

The sharpest wealth declines in the U.S. have hit minority families. Hispanic households suffered asset losses of 66 percent between 2005 and 2009; wealth in Asian American households fell by 54 percent; African American households dropped 53 percent.⁶ During 2011, compensation to those in Wall Street's financial industry in total rose to near record levels, up 4 percent over 2010,⁷ and in October 2012 Wells Fargo bank reported a jump of 22 percent in profits; JP Morgan, 34 percent.⁸

A critical examination of these kinds of social dynamics is a vital part of radical pedagogy. Anyone who has grown up in the U.S.A. typically has little awareness of the nature of wealth or the pattern of its distribution in society. We also lack insight into the connection of income flows to relations of capitalist property ownership and the commodification of labor and life. A widely-used text, *Social Problems*, by Macionis (2012, 31) stands out admirably in its emphasis on the facts of the unequal distribution of wealth. Ma-

cionis utilizes the standard economic definition of wealth in terms of the value of the property to which one has title, minus debts. In the U.S.A. today, wealth distribution can be depicted on a vertical line representing all households in a declining order of property ownership, from top to bottom in quintiles as follows:

- 85 percent of the *total wealth* is held by the richest fifth of all households
- 11 percent by the second wealthiest fifth
- 4 percent by the middle fifth
- 1 percent by the second lowest fifth
- -1 percent by the poorest fifth of all households

When we first started teaching twenty-five years ago, the top quintile owned significantly less, 78 percent of the total wealth, and the poorest quintile owned a positive, albeit tiny, percentage (1 percent). The second richest quintile then had 15 percent of the wealth compared to its 11 percent share today.

This pattern of polarization has also transpired with regard to incomes, over time, such that today “income inequality has soared to the highest levels since the Great Depression.”⁹ “The increase in incomes of the top 1 percent from 2003 to 2005 exceeded total income of the poorest 20 percent of Americans.” (U.S. Congressional Budget Office in Dowd 2009, 122). On top of this, in February 2013, Emmanuel Saez of the University of California, Berkeley, reports that during the current recovery the incomes of the top 1 percent rose 11.2 percent, while the incomes of the remaining 99 percent fell by 0.4 percent.¹⁰ According to economist Saez and his colleague Thomas Piketty of the Paris School of Economics, the general pattern is this: *about half of all income the economy produces accrues to the top 10 percent of income earners.*¹¹

If the facts of increasing economic inequality are largely undisputed, the same may not be said of their social significance. The prevailing views among economists and business utopians, represented in the writings of George Gilder (1993) for example, hold that these inequalities are natural and normal, a positive social good. They signify a ladder of opportunity, and meritocratically reward differences in talent, effort, intelligence, perseverance, etc. In their view, it is precisely the possibility of upward mobility that characterizes a democratic economy.

On the other hand, writers in economics like Dowd (2009) and Stiglitz (2012), in sociology like Macionis (2012, 37–39), and political philosophers like John Rawls (1971) characteristically emphasize the profoundly alienating, unequal, and *undemocratic* impacts that such wealth and income maldistribution have on *life chances*. “Life chances” is a technical term in sociology used to indicate the relative access a household has to the society’s economic

resources: decent housing, health care, education, employment, etc. The greater the wealth in one's household, the greater one's life chances. The less wealth in one's household, the fewer the life chances. Life chances (as well as wealth and income) are today being transferred away from the vast majority of households and redistributed to the advantage of the wealthiest. Rawls (1971) has argued that departures from universal equality are in principle departures from social justice, and his views are persuasive in terms of social contract theory and a version of Kant's ethical universalism. One might frame an ingenious thought experiment utilizing his methodology and his concept of the "veil of ignorance" to demonstrate, through abstract logical analysis alone, the advantage (in terms of the sheer probability of enhancing one's life chances) of making the "blind" choice to be born in a perfectly equal society (where each population quintile owned 20 percent of wealth) rather than in one characterized by the stark lopsidedness in the distribution of wealth and life chances as in the U.S. today. In the latter, four out of five quintiles each owns substantially less than 20 percent; only the top quintile owns more. Nonetheless, the abstract philosophical (i.e., ahistorical and asociological) quality of Rawls's theory renders it oblivious to other issues, especially the impacts of racial inequality. Arnold L. Farr, a contemporary Marcusean philosopher with deep appreciation for the work of Charles Mills, makes a trenchant critique of latent racism even in Rawls, liberal democracy's foremost political theoretician (Farr 2009, Chapter 7). Above and beyond Rawls, we shall indicate below the outlines of the socialist labor theory of commonwealth ownership and justice utilized by both Marx and Marcuse and which we contend has a greater material and sociological warrant.

WEALTH [CAPITAL] ACCUMULATION AND WORKFORCE REMUNERATION

Seldom discussed among students (or among faculty) is the question of where wealth comes from or the nature of the relationship of wealth to labor. These issues were first formulated, and for many economists settled without controversy, in the classical economic theory of John Locke and Adam Smith. As is well known, they held that a person's labor is the real source of all wealth and property that one might have the right to call one's own. Locke emphasized the natural equality of human beings and that nature was given to humanity in common:

Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person; this nobody has any right to but himself. The labor of his body and the work of his hands we may say are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labor with, and joined to it something that is his

own, and thereby makes it his property. —John Locke, 1690. *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government*, Chapter V, Paragraph #27.

Similarly Adam Smith held:

The produce of labor constitutes the natural recompense or wages of labor. In that state of things which preceded both the appropriation of land and the accumulation of stock, *the whole produce of labor belongs to the laborer*. . . . In the arts and manufactures the greater part of the workmen stand in need of a *master* to advance them the materials of their work, and their wages and maintenance till it be completed. *He shares the produce of their labor, or the value which it adds to the materials upon which it is bestowed; and in this share consists his profit.*—Adam Smith, 1776. *Wealth of Nations*, Chapter VIII, Paragraphs 1, 2, and 8 (emphasis added).

Marx and Marcuse built upon Locke and Smith, but stressed that labor is a *social* process; that the value created through labor is most genuinely measured by socially necessary labor time; and its product rightfully *belongs* to the labor force as a *body*, not to individuals as such, i.e., grounding a theory of common ownership and justice, i.e., *CommonWealth*.

We can see how much current political discourse has devolved when we note here that even Abraham Lincoln emphasized that “labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.”¹² This foundational economic and political insight is from Lincoln’s Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861, cited in Michael Parenti (1988, 10). Lincoln was aware of Marx’s writing and ideas via the mediation of socialist Horace Greeley’s *New York Tribune*, which published articles under Marx’s byline from 1852–1862 (Reitz 2009).

Marx and Marcuse encompassed the theories of Locke and Smith within a larger philosophy of labor. Where Locke and Smith saw individual labor as the source of private property, in an atomistic (Robinsonian) manner, Marx recognized that all humans are born into a social context. Humanity’s earliest *customs*, i.e., communal production, shared ownership, and solidarity assured that the needs of all were met, i.e., including those not directly involved in production like children, the disabled, and the elderly. This right of the commonwealth to govern itself, and humanity’s earliest ethic of holding property in common, derive only secondarily from factual individual contributions to production; they are rooted primarily in our essentially shared species nature as humans, as empathic beings whose condition is that of *sensuous living labor*, a perspective to be discussed in detail in Reitz’s Chapter 12 below. Richard Leakey (1994, 60–63; Leakey and Lewin 1978) and

Frans de Waal (2013, 2009) stress that the cultural context of cooperation and caring fostered interdependence and an awareness of the power of partnership. These customs and behaviors had the capacity to ensure survival. Subsistence needs were met with relatively little time spent in the collaborative acquisition of necessities (3–4 hours a day); thus the foundation was established for the fuller species life to flourish within the human community. This included the development of language as a derivative of the communal human condition (Leakey 1994, 124).

Communal labor sustained human life and human development. When commodified as it is today, labor's wealth-creating activity is no longer a good in itself. The overall "value" of the activity of the workforce, governed by capitalist property relations, is reduced to its aggregate payroll. The workforce is never fully remunerated for its contribution to the production process precisely because its contribution, when commodified through the labor market, *is reduced to the equivalent of the cost of labor force reproduction*, and the "surplus" is appropriated as property by powerful non-producers. Classical political economy (Ricardo, then Marx) called the downward pressures upon the "value" of commodified labor to drop to de-humanized levels of bare subsistence "the iron law of wages."

For these reasons we wish to argue, as Marcuse clearly saw, that there can be no rehumanization of society and social philosophy without the decommodification of labor. Douglas Kellner called Marcuse's notion of labor decommodification the "*liberation of labor*" (Kellner 1973, 3 emphasis in original). Rehumanization cannot be accomplished without a form of justice grounded in commonwealth ownership. Kellner (1973, 7) has importantly pointed out that by 1967 Marcuse clearly indicated "the qualitative difference between the free and unfree society is that of letting the realm of freedom appear within the realm of necessity—in labor and not only beyond labor" (Marcuse 1970, 63). Like Kellner, we (Reitz 2000, 64) have criticized the earlier Marcuse ([1933] 1973) who tended to overemphasize the activity of *play* as a countervailing force to the alienating attributes of work. But play, like art, can be seen as an extension of the essential activity of sensuous living labor, not as qualitatively distinguished from it. Richard Leakey (1994, 93) emphasizes tool-making as humanity's first industry, and that tools became works of art. The urge to produce depictions of animals and humans also seems to have been irresistible. Marcuse recognized this affinity of art with unalienated labor.

LABOR THEORY OF VALUE / CRITICAL THEORY OF WORK

The labor theory of value, even in Locke and Smith, is rejected by most conventional economists who contend that labor is merely a cost of doing

business, and that profit accrues from entrepreneurial skill, technological innovation, and risk-taking. These factors may increase profit in the short run in a sub-division of any given industry, where fractions of capital compete, yet in the long run the innovative production processes and reduced costs and payrolls become the new social average. What has meaning for an individual entrepreneur does not explain the aggregate picture. National income accounts, on the other hand, reveal the structural fundamentals of the value production process. These accounts are insightful and useful in Marxist terms in that they presuppose that labor in each firm (and by extension each branch of production) is paid for through payroll outlays from the total value that is added through the firm's value production process. A critical philosophical perspective demonstrates that labor has a reality and a capacity beyond its theoretical and practical confinement within its commodified form (i.e., a wage or salary). The fuller potential and power of labor, as recognized also by Locke and Smith, challenges the presumption that capital produces value, the view that profit *unilaterally* accrues as a reward for the contribution of the investor/employer. Labor provides the total value added in the production process. Profit is a *subtraction* from the value produced.

The Americanization of the world-wide economy aims at the overall reduction of payrolls on the global assembly line, no matter the greater levels of manufacturing employment in developing countries. The model we develop in this chapter¹³ will illustrate the dynamics of wealth acquisition and accumulation and the generative mechanisms that are the origins of inequality (Figure 1.1). This will substantiate our thesis that inequality is not simply a matter of the gap between rich and poor, but of the structural relationships in the economic arena between propertied and non-propertied segments of populations. Our model may serve as a small but necessary contribution to the advancement of a more economically informed critical theory of society and indicate how and why *property relations* must be addressed in order to root out recurring crises. Figure 1.1 outlines the dynamics of this value *production* process in manufacturing, and discloses the fundamental *distributive* structures of the contemporary business economy: capital acquisition/accumulation and workforce remuneration. If labor creates all wealth, as John Locke and Adam Smith maintained, then labor creates all the value that is distributed as income to the labor force (wages and salaries) and to capital (rent, interest, dividends, and profit).

The social relations of production that organize society's productive forces to produce a surplus product are not merely modes of essential cooperation, they are also power and privilege relations. The power and privilege relations of a society will dominate the productive forces and essential work relations to ensure that total product be more than the minimum necessary product. We emphasize that incomes returned to capital and labor are *struc-*

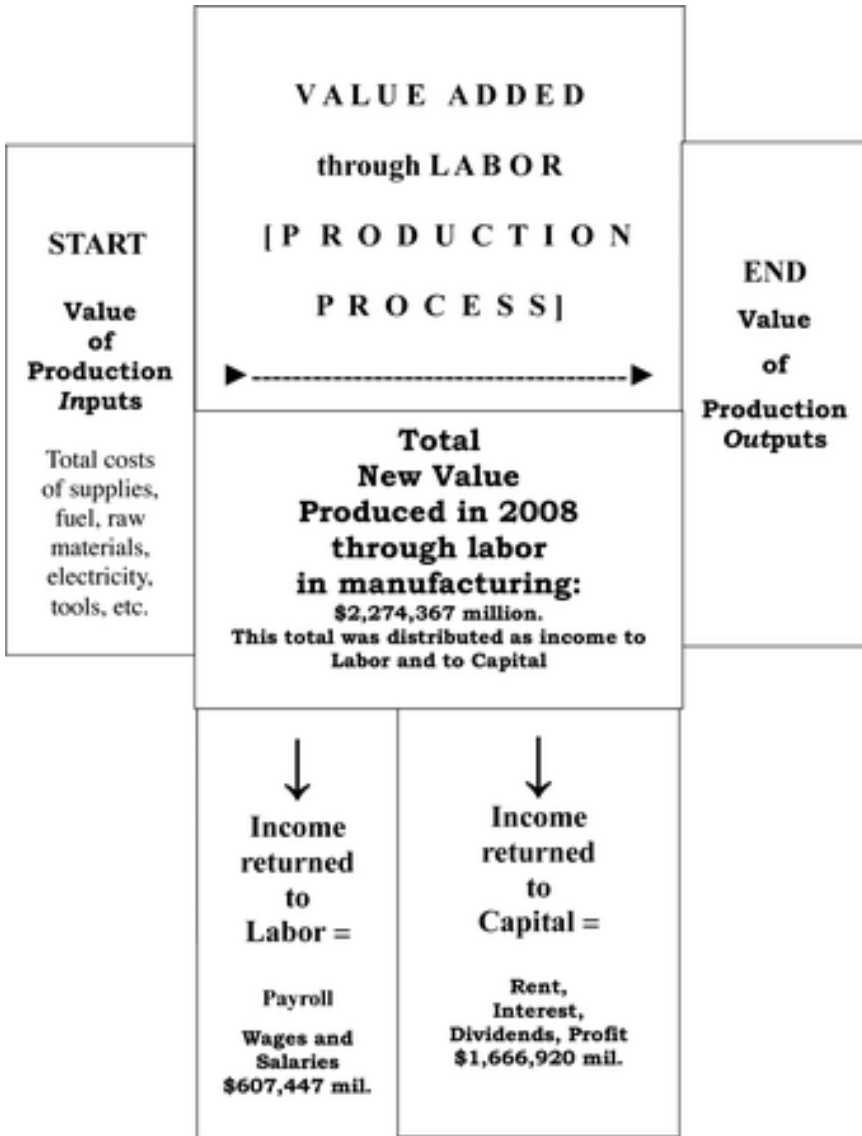


Figure 1.1. Value Production and Distribution as Income: Dynamics and Structure. Figure created by author.

turally determined, i.e., conditioned primarily by societal, rather than individual, factors.

The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* includes data from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau. The methodology utilized to calculate the gross domestic product looks at the amount of *new wealth created, i.e., value added* through production in each firm and each industry. This is calculated by deducting the dollar costs of the *inputs* (supplies, raw materials, tools, fuel, electricity, etc.) from the dollar value of the *outputs*. These national income accounts—unlike the prevailing business utopian models—do *not* include the “cost” of labor among the *input* costs in the conception of the production process they utilize. Instead, they treat workforce remuneration as do Locke, Smith, and Marx, above,—as an income flow stemming from the *value production process* itself.

The following discussion of the origins and outcomes of income inequality in the manufacturing sector offers several insights that can be useful when considering other sectors of the U.S. and global economies, such as financial and information-based services. We recognize that the financial sector of the economy has been producing increasing shares of GDP: 2.8 percent in 1950, 4.8 percent in 1980, and 7.9 percent in 2007 according to the research of David Scharfstein and Robin Greenwood of Harvard Business School as reported recently by Gretchen Morgenson.¹⁴ Joseph E. Stiglitz also emphasizes that growth in the financial sector has contributed “powerfully to our society’s current level of inequality,” and this largely because it has “developed expertise in a wide variety of forms of rent-seeking” (Stiglitz 2012, 36–37). Much more needs to be said about rent-seeking, and we shall do so in this chapter below. The analysis of manufacturing data that concerns us here, however, is absolutely necessary in order to build our critical theoretical foundation. This will allow us to clarify and distinguish our views on value production, as we do below, from those of some postmodern and neoliberal theorists who confuse an inflation of asset prices for production of value. As Morgenson points out,¹⁵ income to money management firms, like mutual funds, hedge funds, and private equity concerns, increases when the *price* of assets that are overseen increases, even though the cost of providing financial services does not increase. This increased income does not derive from the creation of *value* but from an *extraction of wealth* from savers (like pension funds and institutional investors) to the financial sector. Jodi Dean (2012, 136–154) describes in striking fashion the information and knowledge sector’s most novel contemporary elaborations of exploitation and expropriation—including new labor forms that even *dispense* with wage payment (i.e., contests and prize competitions in which only a few are rewarded but all create viable products with their labor).

Our analysis seeks to draw out basic implications latent in standard economic data, and to arrive at certain significant findings that have been avoided in standard economics and business textbooks. In agreement with Marcuse’s dialectical analysis, we see the global system of finance and com-

merce as no longer viable, plunging toward a dreadful reckoning with its own contradictions: attempting to reproduce its mode of privilege at the expense of the reproduction of the productive base (see also Greider 1997, 316).

Though the basics of value creation and the dynamics of capital acquisition and workforce remuneration are well known in critical Marxist circles, let us illustrate them here nonetheless with a simple hypothetical. In this example assume that you can buy for \$50 a quilting kit containing everything you need (fabrics, thread, pins, needles, scissors, and design) to construct by hand an attractive quilt. After you assemble the kit, the finished quilt is an item you can really sell for \$350. By the end of the production process, the materials in the kit have been transformed in economic value: there is \$300 in *value added*. The factor that generated the added value is your labor. Since you bought the kit and built the quilt, you earned \$300 through your productive activity. Assume also that you can get someone else to build a similar quilt from a \$50 kit you already own. This person agrees to construct the quilt for \$100. At the end of the work/production process under capitalist productive relations, you own the quilt, because you owned the kit and you hired another to work-up the materials. After again selling the quilt for \$350 and paying your employee the \$100 fee for the labor provided, you keep \$200 of the \$300 value added as your due, though you were not active in the actual production process yourself. In this case, the employee gets income from this activity because of his or her labor. You get income because of your ownership. In this sense business people traditionally speak of the ownership of *income-producing property*. We know it was not the *property* that produces income, rather it is the *property and power relationships* of the business system that allow owners of capital to appropriate income that it has not earned from wealth it has not created. Major firms in the garment industry operate according to the structural dynamics of this example with their labor force functioning as the employee above did, writ large. Whether at the macro or micro level, however, under this system, private ownership of capital is clearly not socially necessary for *value production*. The necessary component is *labor*. We must abstract from the particular qualities of the labor power of any individual person and instead focus on labor power at the average industry rate of productivity, what Marx called socially necessary labor time (see Raj Patel 2009, 66). A *critical* appreciation of work turns right side round the empiricist assertion that “job creators” are paying their employees, and demonstrates that employees are paying their employers. Our analysis of 2011 U.S. Census Bureau data undertaken below will demonstrate this. The power of the strike is to withhold these payments to propertied interests; the power of socialism is the reduction/elimination of them. In any society the labor force must produce a surplus of value/wealth to maintain infrastructure and provide for social goods such as health care, education, etc., over and above incomes to individuals. Marx’s point is that *only*

the labor force as a social body has a legitimate right to manage this surplus. When it does, the first condition for a humanist commonwealth has been met.

Critical political economy has developed a vocabulary (as Stephen Spartan elaborates in Chapter 7 below, deriving from Perry Anderson and Nicos Poulantzas) of “modes of base reproduction,” “modes of surplus reproduction,” the “reproduction of modes of privilege,” and the “reproduction of modes of governance”—each of which involved a mode of productive labor. These will be helpful also in explaining our Figure 1.1.

Every dollar of the value added in U.S. manufacturing—for example in 2008, \$2,274,367 million¹⁶ (the most recent available figure)—was distributed into one of the two basic reproduction categories: 1) as income to the workforce—as *payroll* (wages and salaries)—\$607,447 million; and 2) as income to owners and investors—as *profit, rent, dividends, and interest*—\$1,666,920 million. *Something very like this disproportionate division of the added value between labor (36.4 percent) and capital (63.6 percent) is structured by unequal property relations into the dynamics of reproduction in every sector of the economy and into the division of the Gross Domestic Product overall.* This is the root of capitalism’s recurrent over-appropriation crises, to which we shall turn below.

Figure 1.1 depicts the three inextricably interconnected activities of production, distribution, and capital accumulation. It discloses how *a system of appropriation is embedded within the relationship of wage labor to capital* in the distribution process. This model is derived from standard approaches to national income accounting, for example in McConnell and Brue (2005) and Parkin (2005). Our theoretical contribution here is to bridge the traditional macro-micro separations, which artificially and unnecessarily detach a macro discussion of national income from a micro consideration of income distribution in terms of wages, salaries, rents, profits, dividends and interest. Figure 1.1 shows that income distribution fundamentally occurs in a structurally determined manner (contrary to the prevailing emphasis on the individual features of performance and remuneration).

Figure 1.2 presents empirical data from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 2011* measuring wealth created (value added) in manufacturing. The data (Table 1006) was retrieved June 11, 2011, from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/11statab/manufact.pdf>.

Looking at the data, we see, for example, that in category 3152, *cut and sew apparel* (analagous to our quilt example), total value added (in millions) was \$7,385. The payroll (in millions) was \$3,075. Therefore the amount returned to capital (in millions) was \$4,310. This latter figure is an amount equal to 100 percent of what was paid to the workforce *plus* an extra 40 percent. What is true in this sector of the economy holds true in every other branch even more dramatically. In category 3118, *bakeries and tortilla*, total value added (in millions) was \$34,108, the payroll was \$9,442; hence

Table 1006. Manufactures—Summary by Selected Industry: 2008

[12,781.2 represents 12,781,200. Based on the Annual Survey of Manufactures; see Appendix B]

| Industry based on shipments | 2002 NAICS code ¹ | All employees | | | Production workers ² (1,000) | Value added by manufactures ³ (mil. dol.) | Value of shipments ⁴ (mil. dol.) |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|--|---|
| | | Number ⁵ (1,000) | Payroll | | | | |
| | | | Total (mil. dol.) | Per employee (dol.) | | | |
| Manufacturing, total | 31-33 | 12,781.2 | 607,447 | 47,527 | 8,872.9 | 2,274,367 | 5,486,266 |
| Food ⁶ | 311 | 1,437.8 | 51,818 | 36,039 | 1,113.7 | 246,222 | 649,056 |
| Grain and oil seed milling | 3112 | 53.2 | 2,817 | 52,953 | 39.5 | 29,988 | 94,000 |
| Sugar and confectionery products | 3113 | 61.9 | 2,625 | 42,431 | 47.3 | 13,184 | 26,648 |
| Fruit and vegetable preserving and specialty food ⁷ | 3114 | 167.7 | 6,232 | 37,161 | 138.5 | 28,045 | 63,187 |
| Dairy products | 3115 | 132.3 | 5,899 | 44,592 | 96.6 | 27,072 | 98,118 |
| Animal slaughtering and processing | 3116 | 505.7 | 15,217 | 30,094 | 438.9 | 50,823 | 169,925 |
| Bakeries and tortillas | 3118 | 271.6 | 9,442 | 34,760 | 172.8 | 34,108 | 58,701 |
| Beverage and tobacco products | 312 | 152.8 | 7,322 | 47,905 | 87.0 | 76,292 | 125,520 |
| Beverage | 3121 | 134.7 | 6,223 | 46,196 | 73.5 | 44,833 | 88,085 |
| Textile mills | 313 | 135.6 | 4,661 | 34,383 | 113.1 | 12,471 | 31,845 |
| Textile product mills | 314 | 136.3 | 4,151 | 30,455 | 104.9 | 11,540 | 26,630 |
| Apparel | 315 | 148.9 | 3,887 | 30,112 | 116.2 | 9,257 | 19,596 |
| Cut and sew apparel | 3152 | 118.5 | 3,075 | 25,951 | 92.2 | 7,385 | 15,608 |
| Leather and allied products | 316 | 31.7 | 994 | 31,361 | 23.9 | 2,619 | 5,411 |
| Wood products ⁸ | 321 | 461.6 | 15,619 | 33,834 | 365.5 | 34,577 | 88,004 |
| Sawmills and wood preservation | 3211 | 91.7 | 3,394 | 37,024 | 76.9 | 7,278 | 24,272 |
| Paper | 322 | 403.2 | 20,546 | 50,957 | 311.6 | 79,175 | 178,749 |
| Pulp, paper, and paperboard mills | 3221 | 117.8 | 7,794 | 66,142 | 93.6 | 40,476 | 82,923 |
| Converted paper products | 3222 | 285.4 | 12,752 | 44,687 | 218.0 | 38,700 | 95,826 |
| Printing and related support activities | 323 | 625.9 | 25,138 | 41,491 | 425.4 | 60,033 | 99,167 |
| Petroleum and coal products | 324 | 105.9 | 8,415 | 79,444 | 68.2 | 91,559 | 769,886 |
| Chemical ⁹ | 325 | 780.1 | 50,766 | 65,074 | 448.8 | 355,481 | 751,030 |
| Basic chemical | 3251 | 151.8 | 10,880 | 71,656 | 92.2 | 83,629 | 244,174 |
| Pharmaceutical and medicine | 3254 | 249.1 | 18,771 | 75,347 | 117.8 | 142,773 | 194,478 |
| Soap, cleaning compound, and toilet preparation | 3256 | 104.4 | 5,667 | 54,259 | 62.7 | 46,661 | 97,431 |
| Plastics and rubber products | 326 | 796.5 | 31,580 | 39,651 | 613.2 | 91,431 | 204,679 |
| Plastics products | 3261 | 651.8 | 25,299 | 38,815 | 499.7 | 76,503 | 167,423 |
| Rubber product | 3262 | 144.7 | 6,281 | 43,415 | 113.5 | 14,929 | 37,256 |
| Nonmetallic mineral products | 327 | 443.4 | 19,372 | 43,694 | 338.0 | 61,994 | 115,920 |
| Glass and glass product | 3272 | 93.9 | 4,227 | 45,042 | 74.0 | 12,562 | 23,197 |
| Cement and concrete products | 3273 | 213.6 | 9,106 | 42,637 | 161.8 | 29,774 | 57,779 |
| Primary metal ¹⁰ | 331 | 418.3 | 22,693 | 54,245 | 326.7 | 93,554 | 282,141 |
| Iron and steel mills and ferroalloy | 3311 | 199.3 | 7,668 | 70,150 | 87.4 | 43,036 | 126,332 |
| Foundries | 3315 | 144.0 | 6,435 | 44,689 | 118.3 | 15,492 | 31,842 |
| Fabricated metal products ¹¹ | 332 | 1,572.7 | 69,231 | 44,021 | 1,153.4 | 188,072 | 358,363 |
| Forging and stamping | 3321 | 123.5 | 5,763 | 46,663 | 62.0 | 15,834 | 34,899 |
| Architectural and structural metals | 3323 | 408.5 | 17,253 | 42,239 | 293.1 | 44,878 | 94,980 |
| Machine shops, turned product and screw, nut, and bolt | 3327 | 398.5 | 17,748 | 44,537 | 298.5 | 39,941 | 64,064 |
| Coating, engraving, heat treating, and allied activities | 3328 | 136.0 | 5,360 | 39,403 | 104.0 | 16,432 | 27,740 |
| Machinery ¹² | 333 | 1,127.4 | 57,212 | 50,749 | 726.1 | 168,153 | 356,954 |
| Agriculture, construction, and mining machinery | 3331 | 209.2 | 10,279 | 49,147 | 143.0 | 39,037 | 94,334 |
| Industrial machinery | 3332 | 127.6 | 7,648 | 59,919 | 67.6 | 18,703 | 35,612 |
| Ventilation, heating, air conditioning, and commercial refrigeration equipment | 3334 | 145.8 | 8,019 | 41,297 | 104.7 | 19,092 | 40,702 |
| Metalworking machinery | 3335 | 161.3 | 8,305 | 51,502 | 112.1 | 17,326 | 29,277 |
| Computer and electronic products ¹³ | 334 | 1,034.1 | 66,345 | 64,156 | 493.8 | 234,390 | 391,082 |
| Computer and peripheral equipment | 3341 | 92.6 | 5,908 | 63,792 | 34.7 | 38,727 | 68,110 |
| Communications equipment | 3342 | 132.8 | 8,961 | 67,481 | 53.9 | 30,504 | 53,965 |
| Semiconductor and other electronic component | 3344 | 371.6 | 20,486 | 55,123 | 227.9 | 71,258 | 116,809 |
| Navigational, measuring, medical, and control instruments | 3345 | 395.1 | 29,033 | 73,475 | 151.3 | 88,473 | 139,775 |
| Electrical equipment, appliances, and component | 335 | 411.9 | 19,038 | 46,226 | 285.3 | 61,975 | 131,759 |
| Electrical equipment | 3353 | 144.4 | 6,890 | 47,705 | 96.1 | 21,840 | 44,301 |
| Transportation equipment ¹⁴ | 336 | 1,474.4 | 82,532 | 55,976 | 1,018.6 | 252,187 | 666,807 |
| Motor vehicle | 3361 | 163.0 | 11,318 | 69,424 | 139.5 | 52,337 | 210,978 |
| Motor vehicle body and trailer | 3362 | 123.5 | 4,789 | 38,790 | 95.0 | 10,208 | 29,764 |
| Motor vehicle parts | 3363 | 523.7 | 24,771 | 47,297 | 391.6 | 62,812 | 174,648 |
| Aerospace product and parts | 3364 | 458.8 | 30,692 | 70,340 | 238.2 | 93,036 | 178,709 |
| Ship and boat building | 3366 | 149.0 | 6,857 | 46,016 | 103.1 | 16,665 | 30,430 |
| Furniture and related products ¹⁵ | 337 | 459.8 | 16,344 | 35,544 | 343.3 | 43,965 | 80,466 |
| Miscellaneous ¹⁶ | 339 | 642.9 | 29,782 | 46,322 | 397.1 | 99,460 | 153,200 |
| Medical equipment and supplies | 3391 | 313.7 | 16,151 | 51,491 | 188.3 | 60,424 | 84,020 |

¹ North American Industrial Classification System, 2002; see text, Section 15. ² Includes employment and payroll at administrative offices and auxiliary units. All employees represents the average of production workers plus all other employees for the payroll period ended nearest the 12th of March. Production workers represent the average of the employment for the payroll periods ended nearest the 12th of March, May, August, and November. ³ Adjusted value added; takes into account (a) value added by merchandising operations (that is, difference between the sales value and cost of merchandise sold without further manufacture, processing, or assembly), plus (b) net change in finished goods and work-in-process inventories between beginning and end of year. ⁴ Includes extensive and unmeasurable duplication from shipments between establishments in the same industry classification. ⁵ Includes industries not shown separately.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Survey of Manufactures, "Statistics for Industry Groups and Industries: 2008," June 2010, <<http://www.census.gov/manufacturing/sam/index.html>>.

634 Manufactures

U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2011

Figure 1.2. Value Added by Manufactures – Total Payroll = Income Returned to Capital.

\$24,666 was returned to capital, more than double the amount returned to labor.

This analysis has examined incomes in the context of political and property relationships that are key to wealth accumulation, emphasizing how property relations account for the basic fact of the U.S. economy—the highly unequal distribution of incomes resulting from the patterns of workforce remuneration and the patterns of returns flowing to capital (via “income-producing wealth”).

INTENSIFYING INEQUALITY AND THE CAPITAL VALORIZATION CRISIS

Global economic polarization between those with immense property holdings versus the intensified immiseration of those without has led to the deepening crisis of finance capitalism that much of the world is currently witnessing. The 2008 economic debacle in the U.S. resulted in massive investment and job losses stemming directly from the institutional inability of the “world’s strongest financial system” (The Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission 2011, xvi) to manage huge U.S. surpluses of capital without reckless speculation and massive waste of societal resources. The brutal consequences of this crisis are fairly well-known; its origins, however, are not. It was necessary therefore to impel the analysis *forward* with contemporary data, as we have done above, and *more deeply*, through to a critical understanding of the roots of capitalism’s remuneration/reproduction dynamics and structure, summarized above in our model, Figure 1.1.

The global economy is increasingly one world supervised by global finance capital (Greider 1997). Finance capital derives its income from interest payments on massively extended credit (Greider 1997, 285–289). A governing system of, by, and for finance capital has emerged largely led by U.S. interests, yet it is unsustainable in its own terms.

Austerity budgeting is the preferred social policy of hegemonic U.S. and global financial interests today, and now the primary function of sovereign states is the enforcement of debt payments to Wall Street and its own debt service through structural adjustment policies and budgeting that shifts resources from social-needs-oriented programs to financial institutions. Keynesian strategies in support of the U.S. (or Greek or Portuguese) labor force are no longer necessary in a political milieu where reactionary politicians will demand and liberal politicians will agree to direct government subsidies to finance capital.¹⁷ Clearly the political terrain is contested, with recent major demonstrations and general strikes in Spain and Greece suppressed with police state tactics mid-September, and again in mid-November, 2012.

Predation within the economy has intensified with the emergence of “fast” capitalism—characterized by manic investing unhinged from reality in pursuit of market advantage in financial assets—described by Ben Agger (1989, 2004). Given deregulation, megamergers of financial institutions, globalized communications technologies facilitating instantaneous capital flows, reckless investment in the real economy (commercial and residential real estate) and synthetic product (unreal derivatives, etc.), huge accumulations of capital (Greider 1997, 232) have been amassed at the pinnacle of the global economy (i.e., largely in the U.S.). The U.S. capital glut led to a condition where investment banks have had to devise ever more speculative strategies to realize profit given the super-abundance of wealth accumulated at the top. This is what we refer to as the over-appropriation crisis or the crisis of capital valorization. Today the global capitalist system is hyperactive. It is erratic,¹⁸ desperate, disintegrating, and self-destructive. We have just witnessed two typical scandals of desperate and self-destructive finance capital today: JP Morgan’s enormous hedging designed to distort financial markets in their favor, and the Barclay’s scandal of manipulation of the Libor (London inter-bank offered rate) with knowledge of New York Fed regulators.¹⁹

Never content to receive less than maximal returns, capital is today as always hungry for valorization, seeking yields above average rates of profit. Yet the capital valorization process is currently in crisis. Prior to 2008, Wall Street institutions like American International Group (AIG), Bear Stearns, Citigroup, Countrywide Financial, Fannie Mae, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Moody’s, and Wachovia had huge capital surpluses which they were frantic to valorize.

One strategy of some key financial institutions was to back massively real estate development trusts (REITs) to overbuild both commercial and residential properties. In order to reap big returns this business plan also required that banks recklessly issue enormous amounts of mortgage credit to commercial and residential buyers, even when these were patently unqualified. Investment bankers then hedged their real estate investment bets by insuring themselves against commercial and residential mortgage client default through convoluted over-the-counter derivatives, credit default swaps.

Many financial institutions designed investment instruments consisting of bundles of the so-called subprime (in fact fraudulent) mortgages, had them triple-A rated by complicitous auditors,²⁰ “flipped” the lethal assets for a fee, and shunted them to those less astute (institutional investors, pension plans, credit unions, etc.) who would directly bear the loss.²¹ Some investment banks then conducted credit default swaps such that they, not the parties who had been sold the assets, were the beneficiaries when the defective investment products inevitably crashed and burned. Taxpayers covered the insurers’ liabilities (AIG was “too big to fail”) so that Wall Street, whose repro-

duction as a mode of privilege within the current social formation is imperative, was guaranteed payment for its worthless investment instruments.

The strategic irrationality of this country's leading investment banking institutions arises from the systemic fetish characteristic of *finance* capital (as well as of *industrial* capital as emphasized by Marx in *Capital*).²² This is the obsession with an asset's ostensible price (as a marketable commodity) independent of its value as a function of socially necessary labor time or its use. The bubbles in asset prices in the dot.com area, telecommunications, as in commercial and residential real estate, resulted from finance capital's compulsion under penalty of extinction to seek the valorization of capital (profit acquisition/accumulation) through desperate bets on price fluctuations and volatile market values in speculative transactions independent of values as measured by real factors of production. A highly financialized economy, in which capital seeks valorization without employment, leads to the delusional (inflated, unreal) claims on wealth that are not sustainable. "Real estate values are up! The stock market is up!" These gains are "really there" only if the conditions that inflate these prices persist. Price fetishism confuses selling price growth with real value growth.

Investment in U.S. Treasury bonds has also been a traditional haven for surplus capital. After the debt limit showdown of mid-summer 2011, investment ratings agencies like Standard & Poor's have downgraded U.S. bonds. This increases the U.S. government's costs of borrowing and also increases the returns on these investment instruments. From the bondholder/rentier perspective, awash in wealth and wishing to maximize revenues, a bounce in the premiums the U.S. government can be made to pay on its borrowed funds is a desirable prospect.²³ Similarly, changes to the U.S. tax code favorable to the biggest corporations and the super-rich have not only relieved them of a significant tax burden: monies spared from taxation in this manner may instead be loaned back to the U.S. Treasury, earning interest, thus providing wealthy individuals and large corporations a positive rather than a negative income flow.

Neoliberal and neoconservative policies today serve what William Greider (1997, 285–289) has termed "The Rentiers' Regime." Joseph E. Stiglitz (2012) has also linked "rent seeking" to his understanding of the world's "1 Percent Problem." In light of Stephan Spartan's analytical categories developed in Chapter 7 below, rent-seeking may also be seen as a mode of privileged accumulation and surplus over-appropriation.

The term "rent" was originally used to describe the returns to land, since the owner of land receives these payments by virtue of his ownership and not because of anything he *does*. This stands in contrast to the situation of workers, for example, whose wages are compensation for the *effort* they provide. The term "rent" was then extended to include monopoly profits, or monopoly

rents, the income one receives simply from control of a monopoly. Eventually the term was expanded still further to include the returns on similar ownership claims. (Stiglitz 2012, 39)

Marcuse understood what subsequent writers called neoliberal and rentier politics as preemptive counterrevolution. Today this entails: the police-state U.S.A. Patriot Act, Global Terror Wars, a “money-is-speech” Supreme Court, and intensifying political economic inequalities. We can see how the neoliberal business utopian model is incapable of liberating humanity because it requires humanity to remain dependent on commodities, markets, and the financial and investment priorities of those who monopolize the capital accumulation process and speculate on the temporary price fluctuations of assets. Commodity-dependency is the foundation of unfreedom in contemporary societies.

This dependency on commodities, markets, and finance, is not inevitable. Realigning the social order to conform with the highest potentials of our economy, technology, and human nature requires the decommodification of certain economic minimums: health care, child care, education, food, transportation, housing,—and work, through a guaranteed income. These are pre-revolutionary, *transitional* goals. *Revolutionary* goals envisage a more encompassing view of liberation and human flourishing: the passage from wages and salaries to public work in the public interest—public work for a commonwealth of freedom, with work as life’s prime want. “Commonwealth of freedom” is a concept developed by Boyte and Kari (1996), which we extend in the direction of Marcuse’s radical goals of socialism. We sharply distinguish our analysis from the reputedly radical commentators Hardt and Negri (2009, 2000), whose critique of the Marxist tradition displaces the foundational philosophies of labor humanism and socialism with Foucaultean biopolitical categories and a Wittgensteinian philosophy of language that re-configures notions of the commons in immaterial directions.

The vision of re-humanized social action and social ownership developed in this chapter is an extension and refinement of classical philosophical sources: Aristotle on human beings as the *zoon politikon*: social beings with politics as the key art to the good life; Buddha and Aquinas on good works and relief of suffering; Kant on cosmopolitan humanism; Marx on communism as the actualization of human species potential [Gattungswesen]. It is a mature philosophy of human freedom and fulfillment grounded in human capacities as sensuous living labor. We pursue here also Marcuse’s recommendations on ending the material bases of domination, reshaping the productive forces in accordance with aesthetic form, and the free development of human needs and faculties toward peace and gratification. Authentic freedom is ours when we, as sensuous living labor, grasp intellectually and hold

politically the resources that we have produced and which can be possessed by all within a de-commodified and re-humanized world.

As Marcuse recognizes, the abolition of commodified labor is impossible under capitalism. Hence a critical liberal arts education that helps humanity accomplish its own humanization is inherently limited by the affirmative character of culture (i.e., its tendency to reproduce established inequalities), and is institutionally obstructed today. The Marxist conceptions of *wage-labor* and *commodity fetishism* are the key analytical criteria that measure the underlying dehumanization and commercialization of education and life itself under capitalism. Abolition of these phenomena will be the hallmark of humanist advancement in society and culture.

This society is fully capable of abundance as Marcuse recognized in *One Dimensional Man*, yet the material foundation for the persistence of economic want and political unfreedom is *commodity-dependency*. Work, as the most crucial of all human activities, by which humanity has developed to its present stage of civilization, can be and should be a source of human satisfaction. Under capitalism it is reduced to a mere means for the receipt of wages. Sensuous living laborers are reduced to being mere containers for the only commodity they can bring to the system of commodity exchange, their ability to work. Necessities of life are available to the public exclusively as commodities through market mechanisms based upon ability to pay.

Commodified existence is not natural; it is contrived. Significant portions of commodified social life need to be rethought and reconstructed. *Charter 2000*, discussed by David Brodsky in Chapter 3, seeks to articulate a common ground political platform that can unify progressive forces to reclaim our common humanity. It asks what kind of world do we want to live in, and its response is a broad, unifying, coherent draft program. It proposes a set of universal desirable outcomes envisioning a democratic society with sustainable abundance.

Consistent with Marcuse's obstinate utopianism ([1937] 1968, 143), we must hammer out what we really desire. What are the most intelligent/wisest uses of labor? We emphasize here the transformation of commodified human labor into *public* work, i.e., work that aims at the public good rather than private accumulation (Boyte and Kari 1996), and how this would undergird progressive political advance. Work in the public interest in the public sector expands areas of the economy traditionally considered the public domain, the public sphere, the commonwealth: social needs oriented projects like libraries, parks, utilities, the media, telephone service, postal service, transportation, and social services.

The decommodification of services in these areas, along with a policy ensuring a guaranteed minimum income, would supply a socialist alternative its fundamental economic viability. So too the decommodification of health care, housing, and education. Already we see that areas within the field of

information technology are pregnant with the possibility of decommodification: public-domain software and shareware on the Internet, market-free access to Skype, etc.

The demand for decommodification sets Marcuse's analysis—and ours—distinctly apart from a *liberal* call for a “politics of recognition” (Taylor 1994; Honneth 1994, 2005) that features *attitudinal* and/or minimal *redistributive* remedies (Fraser and Honneth 2003). While recognition and redistribution are certainly needed, they are not sufficient. The slogan “tax the rich,” while helpful in *liberal* terms, misses the *revolutionary socialist* point that the cure for today's harsh distributional inequalities lies in new relationships of common ownership that restructure the very processes of value creation, production, income and wealth distribution, exchange, and consumption.

No non-socialist theory of society or education has any profound quarrel with wage labor or the general system of commodity dependency. Marx admonishes workers: “instead of the *conservative* motto ‘*A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!*’ they should inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, ‘*Abolition of the wages-system!*’” (Marx [1865] 1965, emphasis in original). We have reiterated above how Marx clarified capitalist society's obsession with production for profit rather than human need. This is its structurally generated fetish/addiction to production for commodity exchange rather than for use-values. Production for *use* rather than *exchange* would optimize living conditions within the social formation as a whole. Capitalist productive relations are driving global labor to its knees. Only the abolition of wage labor and commodity fetishism in the economy can restore satisfaction and dignity to an uncommodified labor process.

Like Hegel and Marx, Marcuse understood that a subaltern, serving consciousness becomes aware through labor of its own dependency and unmet human needs. Ultimately, it learns also that those it serves are not absolutely independent and free, but rather dependent on it, labor. This reality is a key source of labor's own political education, and the foundation of its philosophy of possibility and hope. The frustration of *our essential sensuous practical activity, labor*, will ultimately propel a *politics of labor ownership of wealth* as the liberation of the repressed political potential of the human species. In the dominator systems that characterize global cultures today, not even the oppressors or their children are capable of coming to self-knowledge strictly through the agency of those educational forces committed institutionally to the reproduction of an oppressive social division of labor. Only through the practical and intellectual opposition to the reproduction patterns of domination can any theorist emancipate himself or herself from even the most consoling mystifications of oppressor systems. And only thus does practice or theory become critical.

We have learned from the movements against racism and sexism that class relations do not wholly demarcate structures of dominator power. Racism, patriarchy, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination, disrespect, and inequality sorely inhibit our powers of actualization. Reactionary forces reinforce bias of every sort in the hoary yet effective strategy of divide and conquer. While the general abolition of the wages system is not absolutely *sufficient* to secure the conditions for each of us to become all that we are capable of being, *the alienation and exploitation of labor is the enabling material core that today requires the dominant culture to target innocent minorities as scapegoats.*²⁴ Radical social science must empower general education students (i.e., the labor force in a multicultural society) intellectually, politically, and culturally to end these abuses.

Labor's key challenge today is re-thinking economics, building a theory and a practice for a humane world system. We stress here also the role of theory in scholarly research, explanation, social science. The business mind—the logic of marginal advantage within a market society that ostensibly accomplishes widespread prosperity—has been confronted here with the its own contradictions: dehumanized production, an overworked and underpaid labor force, increasing impoverishment. We emphasize the power of the labor movement not only as a source of class contestation over the distribution of the economic value that it has produced, but also as a source of learning and advances in theory and social organization. Labor's traditional values have built the common good, and revolutionary critical pedagogy begins with labor's untold story (see also Boyer and Morais [1955] 1997).

Economic processes today divest us from our own creative work, yet these also form the sources of our future social power. We have recast the discussion of dehumanization and rehumanization in terms of the commodification and decommodification of sensuous living labor. We have thus attempted to furnish the beginnings of a more comprehensive critical social theory stressing the centrality of labor in the economy. Critical philosophy and radical pedagogy must theorize the origins and outcomes of economic and cultural oppression, and be engaged politically with the labor force to end them. This is the logic and manifesto that can liberate the fuller potential of any critical theory of society. As Peter McLaren's essay below will emphasize, critical theory must come to inform the full curriculum, such that its new norms of understanding and justice may enable us to build from within the realities of the present the partnership organizations of the future that will make possible new ways of holding resources and real opportunities for all persons to reclaim the full social power of labor, leadership, and learning.

We have extended some of the most radical components of Marcuse's critical social analysis, and augmented these with our own contributions—primarily through our interpretation and modeling of fact-based observations drawn from the national income accounts and also our work in critical peda-

gogy, labor education, and in the multicultural education reform movement. We have furnished material for curriculum components that may elicit freshened perceptions of the basic workings of the U.S. economy as well as challenge established patterns of education. Such perceptions can help generate a “new sensibility” (Marcuse 1969) with regard to the origins of social inequality, the irrationality and destructive nature of current patterns in the distribution of income and wealth, and the real possibility of a more humane, just, and abundant future. This new sensibility is a “refusal of the actual” (Marcuse 1969, 34), a form of consciousness in which science, technology, and art are released from service to exploitation and mobilized for a new vision of socialism (Marcuse 1969, 23, 26).

The analytical innovations presented here can be regarded as Marcusean insofar as they embody a form of the “Great Refusal” and disclose truths about our human condition and our human potential that are absent from established patterns of academic and political discourse. We have attempted to do this in our discussions of the intensifying inequalities in the social distribution of income and wealth, rival interpretations of the meaning of inequality, the implications of the labor theory of value for wealth accumulation, ownership, and justice, and finally, the 2008 financial crisis in the U.S. Of special significance, we feel, is our model of workforce remuneration and capital accumulation. A depth-dimensional understanding of these dynamics undergirds our entire approach to revolutionary politics, pedagogy, and praxis.

NOTES

1. *The New York Times*, November 24, 2010, p. B-2.

2. See *The New York Times*, July 11, 2011, “Weak Results Are Projected for Wall Street,” p. B-1. However, by March 8, 2013, Wall Street was again flying high, with a nominal rise to pre-2007 levels, though still 10 percent below that when adjusted for inflation. See Floyd Norris, “A Long Way Back for Dow Industrials,” *The New York Times*, March 8, 2013, p. B-3.

3. See Monika Bauerlein and Clara Jeffery, “Speedup: All Work and No Pay,” the cover story in *Mother Jones*, July and August 2011, pp. 18–25. Also Ben Agger, *Speeding Up Fast Capitalism* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004).

4. See also “Companies Spend on Equipment, Not Workers,” *The New York Times*, June 10, 2011, p. A-1.

5. Sabrina Tavernise, “Poverty Reaches 52-Year Peak, Government Says,” *The New York Times*, September 14, 2011, p. A-1.

6. Sabrina Tavernise, “Recession Study Finds Hispanics Hit Hardest: Sharp Wealth Decline,” *The New York Times*, July 26, 2011, p. A-1. The impact of institutional relationships of racial inequality on wage-related income disparities has been classically demonstrated in the study by Michael Reich, *Racial Inequality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). See also Sharon Smith, “Race, Class and ‘Whiteness Theory’” *International Socialist Review*, Issue 46, March–April 2006.

7. Susanne Craig and Ben Protess, “A Bigger Paycheck on Wall St.,” *The New York Times*, October 10, 2012, p. B-1.

8. Ben Protess, "Wells Fargo Reports a 22 Percent Jump in Profit," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2012, p. B-2; Jessica Silver-Greenberg, "Mortgage Lending Helps JP Morgan Profit Rise 34 Percent," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2012, p. B-1.

9. Annie Lowrey, "Costs Seen in Income Inequality," *The New York Times*, October 17, 2012, p. B-1.

10. Annie Lowrey, "Incomes Flat in Recovery, but Not for the 1%," *The New York Times*, February 16, 2013, p. B-1.

11. *Ibid.*, p. B-4.

12. See also John Nichols (2011) and Robin Blackburn (2011). Further, see Kevin B. Anderson (2010) and Charles Reitz (2009).

13. Thanks also to Ken Stone, a radical labor activist and friend of long ago in Hamilton, Ontario, who helped me understand Marxist political economy in the 1970s. He has been involved in anti-racism, human rights, and anti-war activities over the years and is currently a member of the National Steering Committee of the Canadian Peace Alliance and was on the International Central Committee of the Global March to Jerusalem.

14. Gretchen Morgenson, *The New York Times*, October 28, 2012, pp. B-1, B-6.

15. *Ibid.*

16. This and other figures from: Table 1006. Manufactures—Summary by Selected Industry, 2008. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2011*, p. 634.

17. See Raphael Minder, "Revolt Raises Pressure on Spanish Government," *International Herald Tribune*, September 26, 2012, p. A-1; also Liz Alderman and Niki Kitsantonis, "Clashes Erupt in Athens during Anti-austerity Strike," *International Herald Tribune*, September 27, 2012, p. A-3.

18. Louise Story and Graham Bowlet, "Market Swings Are Becoming the New Standard," *The New York Times*, September 12, 2011, p. A-1: "[C]anny investors could profit from the big swings."

19. See Michael J. de la Merced and Ben Protess, "New York Fed Knew of False Barclays Reports on Rates," *The New York Times*, July 14, 2012, p. A-1. Also, Jessica Silver-Greenberg, "New Fraud Inquiry as JP Morgan's Loss Mounts," *The New York Times*, July 14, 2012, p. A-1. Further: "The Spreading Scourge of Corporate Corruption," *The New York Times*, July 13, 2012, pp. B-1, B-5.

20. A separate, yet indicative, case against a ratings agency has recently made it to court. An Australian judge, Jayne Jagot, found that Standard and Poor's was liable for rating an investment instrument AAA in a manner "no reasonably competent ratings agency" would have. See Floyd Norris, "A Casino Strategy, Rated AAA," November 9, 2012, p. B-1.

21. JPMorgan Chase and Credit Suisse recently settled for \$417 million, government charges that they had packaged and sold troubled mortgage securities to investors, without admitting guilt. In 2010, Goldman Sachs settled a similar suit for \$550 million. See Jessica Silver-Greenberg, "2 Banks to Settle Case for \$417 Million," *The New York Times*, November 17, 2012, p. B-1.

22. On the commodity fetish, see Karl Marx (1968, 85–98). Capitalist relations involve a paradoxical inversion: "[S]achliche Verhältnisse der Personen und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Sachen." Human beings are valued only as matters of business, and only matters of business are seen as having human value.

23. Binyamin Appelbaum, "Taking a Closer Look at a Downgrade's Result: Treasuries Likely to Still Appeal to Investors," *The New York Times*, July 31, 2011, p. A-13.

24. See Steven Greenhouse and Steven Yaccino, "Fight Over Immigrant Firings, Strikers Say Pizza Factory Cracked Down to Prevent Union from Organizing," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2012, p. B-1.

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Chapter Two

Socialism One Sector at a Time

Peter Marcuse

Capitalism is in trouble. We use the word “crisis” to describe it, but *not* to suggest that other times are “normal” and desirable. If that were the case, it would serve the Tea Party’s addiction to looking back, wanting to return to the old “pre-crisis” days. We see crisis as rooted in the nature of the system. The crisis accentuates the problems and makes them more visible. They are very apparent today.

In the United States, the unemployment rate has been over 9 percent for more than two years, recovery is minimal, and the real rates for un- and under-employment are much higher. Income inequality is enormous; the top one-half of 1 percent of income recipients got almost 20 percent of all income last year, the bottom 99.5 percent only 80 percent, the top 20 percent got 57 percent, the bottom 20 percent got 3 percent.¹ Education doesn’t help; in 2010, 48 percent of the class of 2010 worked jobs that required less than a bachelor’s degree, and 38 percent didn’t even need high school diplomas. It will get worse: predictions are that number of college grads will grow by 19 million between 2010 and 2020, while the number of jobs requiring that education will grow by less than 7 million.² Climate change is increasing, natural disasters, caused in part by harmful industrial and market-led residential expansion, are posing an even greater threat. Two world wars have cost between 60 million and 92 million lives. Fifteen percent of all households live below the poverty level, 6.7 percent at even less than half of that level.³ Four million households must pay mortgages on their homes for more than they are worth on the market, or are already in foreclosure. Yet the stock market has gone from 3,301 to 14,000 just in the last ten years.⁴

You would think that the door would be open to consider alternatives to a system that had these results, at least if you were not part of the 1 percent, and that socialism would be high on the list—not socialism Soviet Union

style, but socialism as Marx had envisioned it, “to each according to their needs, from each according to their abilities,” “where the free development of each is dependent on the free development of all, and the free development of all is dependent on the free development of each”—a fair and democratic socialism.

But Marx had envisaged a transition to socialism that would depend on revolutionary action, and that led by the proletariat. But revolution in the classic sense is pretty clearly not on the agenda today in any advanced industrial society, or for that matter in any country in the world, and today’s proletariat is very different from what it was in Marx’s day. The closest that any industrially developed country has come, post-war, to a serious movement that adopted democratic socialism as a goal was in 1968. Unexpectedly, a revolution was victorious only in two industrially under-developed countries, Russia and China, and in those, it did not last.

The reasons for the historical defeat—defeat in the sense that its goal, as Marx saw it, of permanent democratic socialist political change and corresponding economic change, was not successfully and sustainably achieved—are complex. There seems to be some threshold beyond which change will not last, some threshold where two bold steps forward seem to be regularly followed by one giant step back. Political change seems to be easier to achieve than economic, although classical Marxist theory would expect the sequence to be the other way around. Certainly the complex recent experiences in China, Tunisia, Egypt, Vietnam, seem to follow that historical pattern.

The underlying explanation may well be straight-forward. Globally, it certainly has to do with the power of the developed industrial countries, the domination of the global South by the global North. Within the technologically most-developed countries of the North, however, it also necessarily has to do with the strength of the forces materially dominating and benefiting from the status quo. But that by itself is no explanation: it takes a combination of the strength of one side and the weakness of the other to determine a result. Why were the revolutionary forces always weaker than the forces of counterrevolution? One explanation is that the established conservative forces maintained their political hold on the forces of physical domination, with their ability to suppress revolutionary change by violence, ultimately with the repressive power of the army, the police, and the judicial apparatus of the state. But again, that explanation will not suffice. Generally, even after the power of the state has been, in principle, captured by the forces of change, the movement in the direction of economic transformation has been very limited, and hardly revolutionary. Only in Nazi Germany was the full force of physical repression brought into play to quell a potential revolutionary movement, and that movement posed no threat even after the defeat of Hitler.

The ideological apparatus in the hands of the establishment in capitalist countries played a significant role in keeping socialism off the table of politically viable possibilities. That result was facilitated by the equation of socialism with the actually existing socialism of the Soviet Union. Not only the lack of freedom, but just as much the standard of living, the gross disparity between the household prosperity in Russia and eastern Europe and that in the United States and western Europe, was glaring. The capitalist system seemed to produce the goods, even if unequally, at a much higher level than the “socialist” east.

Even so, it is not inevitable that the level of production should be the critical factor in determining support for one system over another. The importance placed on the consumption of material goods, after all, is socially generated. Other values dominate other societies, and it is conceivable that the more productive goods are available, above a certain level, the more would values turn to seek the other benefits of living in a free society. The only explanation that seems to me plausible as an explanation of the strength of the forces supporting the status quo, capital and its beneficiaries, and the weakness of the forces of opposition, is the set of theories developed by the Frankfurt school of critical theory, and most explicitly by Herbert Marcuse (I, of course, acknowledge that I am not unbiased; but if it’s right, it’s right . . .). Critical theory points to the deep ways in which the psychology, the ideology, the culture, of advanced technological society, organized under and obeying the laws of capitalism, has penetrated the consciousness of the working class and even the majority of the intellectuals and cultural leaders who might otherwise be expected to be in opposition. It is not simply that capitalism “produces the goods,” but the desire for the acquisition of those goods is seen, felt, and felt deeply, as important, both for individual happiness and self-respect, and as the driving force and motor of the system as a whole. The provision of those goods as commodities, the reliance on the market for their distribution, the desirability of competition both to maximize production and justify distribution, are all internalized, naturalized. With that foundation, capitalism has been able to suppress alternatives such as socialism even from popular consideration.

That argument is certainly spelled out in detail in Herbert Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man*, and in his speeches and article from the 1960s and 1970s (Marcuse 2005). Their focus is, to use the terms broadly, on the cultural hegemony of the ruling establishment, its ability to keep thought and with it action in protest in one-directional channels, channels at best ameliorative and posing no threat to positions of power in the society. It was that hegemony that the New Left challenged, ultimately unsuccessfully, in the 1960s and 1970s.

There are lessons still to be learned from that defeat, clear consequences to be drawn for the necessary strategy of the left if the above analysis is

correct. To begin with, Rudi Dutschke, “Red Rudi,” was a charismatic leader in that movement of the 1960s and 1970s in Berlin. The approach he advocated was “The Long March through the Institutions of Capitalism.” In the militant context of the times, that might well have started in the universities and the factories: democratic government led by students and faculty on the campus, democratic government of and by workers, autogestion (worker self-management), in the workplaces. The approach, recognizing that revolution in its classic form was unlikely to take place all at once but that its goals might be approached strategically piece by piece, is worth taking up again today. Henri Lefebvre and others have argued that such a step-by-step approach to socialism would be most successful if it built on those elements of the existing system that already rested on socialist aspects. David Harvey spoke of them as Spaces of Hope, a fitting image.

There is history in the United States supporting the viability of socialist alternatives. The New Deal is in fact replete with many, circumscribed indeed, but nevertheless illuminating. The Public Works Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, public housing as originally conceived, social security in principle, although income dependent in practice, infrastructure construction, massive public works both for protection of the environment and production of energy. These would all be components of a non-Soviet vision of a socialist society and can be re-popularized as such.

The idea that certain sectors of the economy are logically public is hardly a new one. Fire protection was originally undertaken by private fire companies, education was originally privately provided, most railroads were privately built and operated, so were toll roads. Worker management has a much slimmer history, but is hardly unimaginable; experience in some countries with worker take-overs of individual factories or the formation of cooperatives is quite wide-spread, if limited. But the experience in broad sectors that we now largely take for granted is as germane.

That education can be publicly provided for free is generally acknowledged today. The fight over charter schools in the United States illustrates that there is an attack on its public provision, but there is at the same time a strong defensive movement, and the conflict raises the question of the private role sharply. The form of control is interesting—not teachers themselves, but democratically elected school boards. It might provoke thinking as to how democratic control over other sectors could be established, by some institutionalized relationship between users and workers.

The housing component of the economic crisis today suggests an analogous approach. While liberals bemoan the greed of bankers and the fraudulent practices of brokers, the roots of the crisis go much deeper. They begin with the selling of the myth of home ownership, sold as the only way to have security of tenure, but increasingly exposed as a fragile reed. The alternatives: cooperatives, land trusts, public ownership, mutual housing associa-

tions, become increasingly obvious alternatives. They suggest social housing, non-speculative forms of ownership in which the possibility of a financial profit is not the driving force behind “owning” a home. At a personal level, that opens the door to thought about the relationship between use values and exchange values, an important lesson in itself. But going further, it raises the question of whether the for-profit market is really the best way to allocate housing, one of the necessities of life. Left advocates of rent control have long argued that housing should be provided “for people, not for profit.” That slogan seems more appropriate than ever today.

And what does it mean if not a socialist housing sector—not necessarily covering all housing, and allowing for a non-speculative market to operate—advancing along very anti-capitalist lines.

Major research facilities are public. Space exploration is public. Medical research is in large part public. Security services are in part public, and basic policing generally is. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertakes major infrastructure projects. The Post Office ran quite effectively when it was entirely public, and is even now overseen by Congress in some detail, even if it is also supposed to make a profit. Garbage collection and other municipal services are generally public, and in the United States the idea of municipal socialism was not always anathema. Participation and control in these cases was hardly what Marx had envisioned, but both electoral controls and union participation offer possible openings in a socialist direction. Health care, in other capitalist countries, combines a significant socialist ingredient in its administration, including direct publicly provided care going well beyond single payer.

Ironically enough, current debates about public-private partnerships, much the vogue on the right, open the door to raising the question, not simply about the relative roles, but also about the need for the private sector to begin with. If the private sector can make money performing a public service, why cannot the public sector do the same work at a lesser cost, since it need not return a profit? Even the banking sector is vulnerable to a questioning of the role of profit (when normal business incentives are seen as greed, it’s not so far to question the incentives capitalism relies on altogether). Maybe lemon socialism, as in government bailing out banks and acquiring preferred stock in them, can be a refresher on the way to real socialism? I recently called it, after the lessons of the response to several disasters in the United States, “bankers’ socialism.” One of the slogans of the Occupy movement was “Bail out the people, not the banks.” Is that, substantively, not a call for socialism?

Nationalization, not now under discussion even of banks, *is* taking place in various countries with regard to oil. This is not the same as socialization in the classic Marxist sense; it simply substitutes governmental bureaucracy for a capitalist owner, often even retaining the same management, leaving workers as alienated as they were before. But how direct democracy and worker

control would function in major enterprises is still an open question—how direct the control, the role of elections, user inputs, how competition would function, what role a market could continue to play. In the United States that the unions may control a majority of the stock of the Chrysler Corporation raises only the specter of worker self-exploitation, but why could not larger questions be raised about its potential meaning?

Going even further: is the logic of going from a recognition of problems with capitalism, to re-examining existing alternatives that are exceptions to capitalist modes of operation, to systematically expanding such exceptions, sector by sector, embracing such exceptions as open forms of socialism, to questioning capitalism altogether in theory, to contesting it altogether in practice, such a hard chain of thinking to advance? Doesn't the very prominence of the widespread push by the right for the privatization of existing government functions raise the option of an aggressive posture that would not only defend the existing islands of non-commodified production but call for their expansion? Deepening the debate to go from *private vs. public*, opening up the *socialist vs. capitalist* option, is not so far-fetched.

If there were some commitment to such a strategy, say next for housing and health care, then basic education, child care, continuously with attention to the possibilities of firms "too big to fail," may we not be moving towards socialism one sector at a time? Is a march through the institutions so far-fetched?

AFTERTHOUGHTS

It is not, however, so simple. On the one hand, no sector in the economy exists in isolation. Socialism cannot exist very long in one sector at a time, any more than it could exist very long in one country at a time. In housing, after we take all the profit out of the production of housing and the rent paid to land ownership, there remains a hard core of real costs that must be covered: utilities, maintenance, etc. If the labor sector is not socialized and unemployment is rampant, the sector is vulnerable, and those will as things now stand also be the situations in which governmental support at any decent living level will, politically be hardest to obtain in a non-socialist government. Or take education. After all schools are public and adequately funded, there will still be mammoth differences in the needs of children from poor households compared to those with better-off parents, differences that may widen if labor markets are kept "free market" in a non-socialist society. There is no reason to believe that even successes in one sector at a time, separately, will ultimately converge to produce a victorious change in the system as a whole. Socialism in one sector at a time is a worthwhile goal in

its own right, but the chain that leads to a socialist society requires something more.

On the other hand, we live in a time in which capitalism's flaws are ever more apparent to those willing to look. Unlike in the period of the 1960s and 1970s, capitalism is not "producing the goods." Looking backwards makes an earlier period look rosier than it was, but better than what is. That indeed is one of the significant foundations for the strength of essentially reactionary popular movements like the Tea Parties. The issue, as argued above, involves consciousness, the patterns of thought, a liberation from the awareness-suppression that is so subject to domination in a developed industrial society. The step in the chain from achieving socialism within but limited to one sector at a time is not simply the extension of the chain, their logical movement to close the circle as a whole, but to redo the whole society.

The movement towards socialism in the society as a whole requires a change in the consciousness of the majority. The increasing presence of socialized sectors and their obvious advantages must support the move to break through the one-dimensionality of technologically advanced civilization. It must open the door to the alternate dimension having an awareness of the implications of well-functioning socialized sectors. It is not the greater efficiency of socialized sectors, their economic advantages, that will ultimately make the decisive difference, but the lessons about the possibilities of a truly humanized economy that are opened up. If volunteers are motivated to respond to disasters and do so better than paid workers;⁵ if neighbors are more willing to help each other in times of housing crisis than paid employees or landlords; if teachers love teaching and are willing to do it far beyond the bounds of their pay checks; if doctors who are secure in their occupation are willing to care for the sick regardless of ability to pay; if artists paint, write, draw, make music, first and foremost because they wish to, and only secondarily to earn an income—might that not suggest that an entire economy could be run without the motor of profit, if only the fundamental necessities of life were secured for all?

So the importance of moving towards socialism one sector at a time is not that it can create a widening escape from the bubble of capitalism that will ultimately make it burst by their growth. It is that, but as well the impact on consciousness that the flourishing of those sectors can have. And that means an ideological push aggressively to make clear what those examples mean, what the alternatives for the whole society might be. Art has a role to play here, research and writing and talking unafraid to speak the name of socialism. The chain goes from 1) the remaking of single sectors to 2) the remaking of the consciousness of what the whole society could be if remade, to 3) the actual doing of it society-wide.

NOTES

1. Center on Budget and Policies and Priorities, available at <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=3629>.
2. William McGuinness, "Half of Recent College Grads Work Jobs That Don't Require a Degree: Report," *The Huffington Post*, available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/29/underemployed-overeducated_n_2568203.html.
3. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/people.html>.
4. Based on the Dow-Jones average, unadjusted. Even adjusted for inflation by the cpi, it is over a 500 percent increase. See <http://finance.yahoo.com/q/hp?s=DJI&a=0&b=2&c=1992&d=1&e=27&f=2013&g=d&z=66&y=5016>.
5. See Blog #24—"Helping Sandy Victims: FEMA, Charity, Politics—Occupy Sandy and Human Relations" at <http://pmarcuse.wordpress.com>.

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Chapter Three

Charter 2000

A Transitional Program for Labor

David Brodsky

[T]he labor process . . . [is] the decisive factor through which nature might become the medium for freedom.

—Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*¹

Charter 2000 is an affirmative political platform and plan for renewal built around labor. The platform was developed through democratic discussion fifteen years ago, and its relevance has only grown today. Of necessity, it identifies abuses it seeks to eliminate. But its chief purpose is to articulate positive solutions. It is offered here as a component of a proposed course or unit on really existing capitalism and on alternative systems and policies that serve all the people. It envisions a democratic society of sustainable abundance for everyone.

THE WAR ON LABOR

It is in the interest of all people who must work for a living, and those dependent on them—in other words, everyone except the privileged classes—to mount a counter-offensive against the intensified assault on labor now occurring around the world.² It is even in the interest of the aristocracy of labor, such as managers and professionals, whose expectation of comfortable and influential lives is undergoing demolition.

The current form adopted by the war on labor in the U.S. is a campaign to remove collective bargaining rights, and thus labor unions, from the public sector. The author prefers to call the public sector the public domain. Domain comes from the Latin “domus,” meaning “house, home, family, household,”

while “sector” is an occupied military district. The public domain is where the human family makes its home.

As of May 2011 legislation damaging or demolishing public domain unions had been introduced in nineteen states, eight of them in the Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Ohio. The others are two on the east coast (New Hampshire, New Jersey), two in the south (Florida, Tennessee), two in the Rockies (Colorado, Idaho), three in the southwest (Arizona, Nevada, Oklahoma), and two on the west coast (Oregon, Washington) (“We are One” 2011, 15).

The author now lives in Ohio, which passed a law that *de facto* ends collective bargaining for public employees, a large proportion of whom are organized teachers and academics. Concurrent with the war on labor is a national war on public education, which is being corporatized and privatized. Accordingly, the anti-union law in Ohio is particularly harsh on teachers and academics. Its harshest provisions include outlawing strikes and imposing draconian penalties for striking; replacing the seniority principle with so-called merit; eliminating from collective bargaining the issues of health care, pensions, working conditions (such as class sizes), and privatization of services; and after redefining faculty as managers, excluding all “managers” from collective bargaining, in other words, excluding virtually all academics from union membership and thereby eliminating faculty unions (WKBN Channel 27, 2011). The petition to repeal the law received more than four times the minimum number of signatures needed, and repeal won by 61 percent of the vote on November 8, 2011.

The wars on public domain unions and public education belong to the larger global project of eradicating the public domain entirely (Brodsky 2004). Ending public provision of social services is what Margaret Thatcher meant when she declared “there is no such thing as society.” The long run plan is to reduce most workers to exploited, uninformed, unorganized, and obedient robots, disciplined by a huge reserve army of unemployed living on the margins of an expanding police state.

The labor issues raised here are equally relevant to students, because they are future workers or already hold down jobs,³ and they apply across the curriculum.⁴ As a well-known slogan reminds us, the teacher’s working conditions are the student’s learning conditions. Consequently, the health or impairment of the instructional environment will largely determine whether pedagogical outcomes will be superior or substandard.

Today’s war on labor builds on labor defeats and retreats of many decades. The status of labor in the U.S., including academic labor, has been severely degraded due to a number of factors. The most prominent are:

1. the replacement and deskilling of workers by machines (Braverman [1974] 1998)—technological unemployment, online distance education in the case of academia (Noble 2001);
2. the shift of factories and jobs to regions and countries with the lowest labor and environmental standards and weak or nonexistent worker organization;
3. the replacement of full-time jobs with decent pay and benefits by part-time, contingent, and temporary positions, which pay less than a living wage and offer few or no benefits—in academia part-time and other non-tenure track appointments, now the majority of faculty;
4. the reduced size of the workforce, resulting in overwork for the employed (e.g., full-time faculty) and massive unemployment, underemployment, and immiseration for the rest; and
5. the inaction of labor leaders, and sometimes their outright collaboration with corporations and right-wing government policies (Buhle 1999; Sims 1992).

Additional significant factors responsible for the degraded status of labor, which are specific to public education, include:

1. the neo-liberal redefinition of education as a commodified service industry that serves private rather than public interests, imposed by the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which govern global economic and social policy (Brodsky 2004);
2. corporate profit-motivated and ideologically driven government defunding of higher education, including student aid;
3. corporatization and privatization of public institutions, replacing learning and the production of socially beneficial knowledge with profit-making academic units and capitalist indoctrination; corporate top-down governance replacing delegated faculty governance;
4. results of corporatization and privatization: a) increased private funding to compensate for government defunding, typically with strings attached that violate academic freedom—corporate determined research agendas, secrecy imposed by proprietary interests;⁵ b) corporate ideological control of curriculum, achieved in part through standardized testing regimes; c) right-wing maneuvers to seize disciplines by removing or skirting faculty control of hiring and curriculum (i.e., faculty governance) (Brodsky 2003);⁶ d) massive increases in the student cost of higher education, trapping students in massive lifelong indebtedness to private banks; analogous to endless debt owed the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) that traps smaller nations;

5. right-wing ideological attacks and legislation, targeting in particular the humanities, arts, and social service oriented programs;⁷
6. the rise of for-profit diploma mills as unregulated competition with accredited institutions (Noble 2001);
7. the capitulation of accrediting bodies to the corporate agenda; and
8. the apathy, complacency, or corporate collaboration of many tenured faculty.

The most significant assault on academic labor has been the casualization of the faculty, which began forty years ago. Nationally, well over half the teaching staff are off the tenure track, deprived of job security and academic freedom protections, and their pay and working conditions are often worse than in the fast food industry. The more elite the academic institution, the greater the percentage of casualized instructors (AAUP 2006).⁸

The most significant assault on students has been the inflated cost of education. Student debt has increased astronomically, averaging \$120,000 per student at major public universities. High costs dissuade students from poor and marginal communities from applying for admission and are responsible for their high drop out rate. The trap of indebtedness discourages graduates from pursuing low-paying public interest careers that promise a life of debt penury, or “indentured servitude” (Manski 2011).

CHARTER 2000

Now let us look at a proposal for labor to make gains, rather than preserve its status quo, and for academic labor to restore substance and service to the common good in higher education. “No struggle can be won, when the initiative is in the hands of one’s opponents, if one only thinks at the level of defending what one has” (Fletcher 2011).

Charter 2000: A Comprehensive Political Platform is a detailed program, long-term project, and pedagogical tool. The core of the platform is the expanded concept of human rights developed in United Nations documents.⁹ It can be accessed on the web, with cross-referenced internal links and external links to many of its sources, at <http://progressiveplatform2000.org/Charter-2000-Platform.htm>.

The *Charter 2000* project began its existence May 28, 1992, as an opinion survey asking, “What kind of a society would you like to live in?” Its current form is a synthesis of contributions from 80 people and organizations in the U.S. and abroad, printed sources it acknowledges, and intense local discussions by several dozen participants. It was originally ratified in May 1996.¹⁰ Proposed additions were widely discussed in April 2002. And a fifteenth

anniversary integral version, incorporating original and additional planks, was made in spring 2011.

The platform has been distributed to over 800 people and organizations, including members of Congress Paul Wellstone, Bernie Sanders, and Dennis Kucinich, and endorsed by prominent figures, such as historian Herbert Aptheker, poet Vincent Ferrini, and writer Meridel LeSueur. It has been published on eight websites, in print periodicals, and in a book by Charles Reitz (Reitz 2000).

Charter 2000 attempts comprehensive coverage of fundamental issues. Many are universally human, while others are specific to developed industrial society, particularly the U.S.A. of the twenty-first century. The platform focuses on basic individual and social needs, a universal set of desirable outcomes, alternative ways of organizing society to accomplish its goals, and a strategy of constitutional amendments guaranteeing human rights—political, social, economic, and cultural.

Charter 2000's compact form dispenses with narrative background and justification for proposals. The result is a high density of material, which requires close attention and invites elaboration.

The platform was developed as a discussion document. It confronts ordinary people with broad coverage of essential concrete issues and specific ideas they may never have considered previously. It confronts progressives with the obligation of declaring concretely what they are for, fleshing out abstract slogans with specific and practical content. Some, especially on the left, objected to it as “utopian” (i.e., unachievable), and they recommended diagnosing maladies rather than proposing remedies. Others considered some of its proposals to be too radical. The author's personal experience with group discussions in academic and non-academic settings confirms that it delivers on its promise to stimulate debate. However, no one, including its signatories, agrees with, or is obliged to agree to, all of its planks. Signing indicates support for the effort to develop a comprehensive progressive platform through democratic discussion and input.¹¹

Discussion of unfamiliar but sensible proposals shows that *Charter 2000* has the potential to change minds. For example, students enrolled in a college course were assigned to discuss one or more planks with acquaintances or strangers in public places. While initial reception was often hostile, some students reported that when they returned a week later, they found the same individuals arguing passionately in favor of positions they had initially rejected.

Given the range of opinion represented by its published sources and its original contributors and discussants, *Charter 2000* is an eclectic mixture of reformist and radical ideas. Nevertheless, because all its proposals focus on the task of realizing fundamental human rights, the document as a whole exhibits a tight coherence. The platform envisions a generous, inclusive, fair,

and democratic society where the value of the work its members do is one of the foundations on which it rests. It is a statement of interdependent goals unified by an underlying vision.

As a platform proposing desirable outcomes, *Charter 2000* offers no specific proposals on how to achieve its goals. Its 1996 “Preamble” reads: “We prefer flexibility: any strategy that furthers the broad progressive transformation of American society is a good one. There are many effective ways of advancing progressive goals, ranging from educational efforts to testimony before public bodies, community and labor organizing, electoral and media campaigns, and actions in the streets (rallies, marches, demonstrations, picketing, and civil disobedience).” While not explicitly stated in the platform, its discussants assumed that the strategy of winning new constitutional amendments guaranteeing rights cannot by itself secure implementation. Implementation will depend on a permanent, militant mass movement insisting on enforcement.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In British and U.S. jurisprudence, the legal definition of a right requires that there be a corresponding remedy for a deficiency or injury. Consequently, human rights remedy deficiencies, often lethally destructive ones, in meeting human needs. *Charter 2000* proposes that a society based on universal human rights not merely remedy deficiencies or injuries *ex post facto* but generate human relations that at the very least prevent harm and, more importantly, provide a solid foundation for a thriving community.

Charter 2000 takes a holistic approach to rights in general, treating them as indivisible (Fields and Narr 1992). It treats political rights as “democratic process,” while grouping social, economic, and cultural rights under the principle of “democratic outcomes.” Together they define adequate democracy. U.S. law generally recognizes only political rights, or process, while excluding social, economic, and cultural rights, or outcomes (Chomsky 1993; Chomsky 2009; Herman 1995). The rights grouped here as democratic outcomes are absent in the U.S. Constitution and rarely found in statutory law.¹² Just as a focus on freedom to the exclusion of justice results in a one-sided and stunted society, the exclusion of the full range of human rights produces substandard democracy, a case of arrested development, what political scientist Michael Parenti calls “democracy for the few” (Parenti 1995).

Historical precedent, confirmed by the present era, demonstrates that exclusion of social, economic, and cultural rights from the practice of democracy eventually results in curtailing political rights as well. While it includes comprehensive sections on “Democratic Process and Structure” (Article I, Section 5, par. B) and on “Electoral Reform” to restore political democracy

(Article I, Section 5, par. C), *Charter 2000* gives precedence to democratic outcomes, whose achievement preserves democratic process as well. “Democratic process and procedures must not be used to restrict civil and human rights, or to enable or further undemocratic outcomes” (Article I, Section 5, par. A). In other words, the political process must not be used to establish policies (like servitude and injustice) that violate the democratic project.

Even though many political rights are protected (in theory) in the U.S. Constitution and government officials cite human rights when it is opportune,¹³ the basic law of the land is silent about many other political rights, including the positive right to vote.¹⁴ The most important U.S. precedent for economic rights is President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s appeal for an Economic Bill of Rights in his State of the Union Address in January 1944. The U.S. refusal to sign the *U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights* four years later exemplified its reactionary agenda of abandoning and attenuating the New Deal. Instead, in 1948, the same year as the U.N. Declaration, the U.S. issued its own competing “American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man” (Laqueur and Rubin 1979). The “American Declaration” is limited generally to protections already found in the Bill of Rights, and it pays lip service to some social and economic rights. The absence of most human rights in the U.S. Constitution signifies their low status in U.S. society as a whole.

The exclusion of full human rights from the basic law of the land generates repeated campaigns to establish them in statutory law. Typically victories are partial and temporary, gains are modest and undermined by obstacles to enforcement, and long and hard battles to win victories can be reversed overnight (e.g., the legal rights of labor and racial minorities, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.). *Charter 2000*’s strategy of enacting Constitutional amendments affirming the full range of human rights, on the contrary, erects more formidable barriers to violating, sabotaging, or eliminating them.

To properly contextualize the status of human rights in the U.S., it is worth remembering that the scale of human rights was expanded most substantially in the era immediately following World War II, as preventive measures in response to Nazi war crimes.

Basic universal rights are what any human being deserves and is owed unconditionally. No one has to satisfy any criteria to receive them. They are natural rights. They belong to people merely because they are alive. They are self-evident and non-negotiable. And they are inalienable, that is, they can’t be bought and sold or otherwise relinquished.

The natural theory of rights assumes the individual as its foundation, starting with the basic fact of the individual’s physical body, whose first need is physical survival (in *Charter 2000* universal rights to food, shelter, clothing, health care). From the point of view of physical survival, the theory of natural rights remains valid today (cf. John Locke’s “right to life”). Those

social human rights which protect and enhance the individual's physical well-being as a social animal (in *Charter 2000* universal rights to jobs/income, transportation, child care, science and technology in the public interest, sustainable environment, security and emergency services) fall generally in the same category. But while they protect physical well being, basic human rights are not material property (e.g., Locke's "right to property"), much less commodities, but social guarantees which are socially determined. Beyond physical well-being *Charter 2000* proposes basic rights that make social life both possible and effective by supporting the realization of individual and social human potential in a democratic society (in *Charter 2000* universal rights to education, communication, culture and the arts, mobility, citizen/consumer power, and political rights).

LABOR RIGHTS IN CHARTER 2000

Charter 2000's proposals remain timely after fifteen years, because its drafters drew conclusions from policy trends of the time which meanwhile have come to maturity. Nowhere is its timeliness more evident than in its labor planks (Article II: Rights/Entitlements, Section 1: Jobs/Income).¹⁵

The first unconditional constitutionally guaranteed right listed in Article II is the right to a job or to income that supports a decent standard of living. This means a 100 percent full employment policy with a living wage. *Charter 2000* proposes a broad definition of paid work, which is not based on the job market. "Any labor that is useful or necessary to individuals or society is a job deserving fair pay" (Article II, Section 1, par. e). Those who can't work, or are retired, between jobs, in school, on leave, and the like deserve a living income.

There are several arguments for a right to a living wage job or living income. To deny someone a living means in practice a threat to physical survival, and all people have survival needs all the time. A less than 100 percent employment or guaranteed income policy creates artificial scarcity, a desperate reserve labor army competing for jobs with inferior pay and working conditions. If, however, no one can be denied a living, then employers lose their power to divide and intimidate the workforce and drive down wages and working conditions.¹⁶

Charter 2000 proposes several plans to finance 100 percent employment and a living income: 1) make the minimum wage a living wage indexed to inflation and the local cost of living; 2) establish a negative income tax; 3) shorten the work week with no loss of pay to open up jobs for others. Shortening the work week also helps fairly distribute the benefits of technological savings to everyone while liberating labor for civic activism.¹⁷

Charter 2000 offers additional funding proposals. “Massive public investment program in cities and rural areas, combined with environmental and agricultural transition plans and military conversion to peacetime, for infrastructure reconstruction and economic revitalization” (Article I, Section 5, par. D, subpar. 1.d). “Shifting from military to peacetime spending, converting the military and ecologically harmful sectors of the economy to socially productive and ecologically sustainable peacetime economic activities; through fair taxation of corporations and the wealthy, of assets of banks, insurance companies, and financial institutions; through public acquisition at scrap prices of companies fleeing to areas with lower labor and environmental standards” (Article 1, Section 7, par. 3).¹⁸

Charter 2000 proposes something like a universal workers bill of rights. It consists of standard and traditional labor demands (Article II, Section 1, par. g: Workers’ Rights), most of which are institutionalized in European countries.¹⁹ They include rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike; to occupational health and safety; to free speech, free assembly, and decision-making power in the workplace; to thorough vocational education, job training, and job retraining; to adequate leisure, time off, paid vacations (minimum 4–6 weeks per year); to sabbaticals (for all workers, not just academics); to a secure and decent retirement (fully vested and transferable pensions); to 1–2 years fully paid parental leave; to up to a year’s leave caring for sick, disabled, or elderly relatives at home. Labor standards must be uniform: “Guaranteed equal rights, benefits, and protections under law (e.g., no discrimination in the workplace, equal pay for comparable work).” It also calls for ending the worst abuses: “no child labor, forced labor, or slave labor (including in prisons).”

Beyond traditional demands, *Charter 2000* proposes positive motivations to work, both personal and social, and the social motivation is grounded in the principle of solidarity and community (Article I, Section 3). Chief motives for working are “a positive contribution to society and personal satisfaction with accomplishments; not restricted to coercion (e.g., survival) or greed (accumulation of wealth and property beyond reasonable personal needs)” (Article II, Section 1., par. d). Society should encourage “creativity, social solidarity, and pride in quality” and jobs should be “matched to an individual’s training and talents” (Article II, Section 1, par. g, subpar. 7).

Job quality increases positive motivation to work. *Charter 2000* gives everyone a choice of whether or not to work and of what kind of work to do: “free choice in employment (dependent on qualifications of individual and democratically determined societal needs); when, where, in what occupation, at what job to work” (Article II, Section 1, par. c). It proposes that jobs be designed, to the greatest extent possible, as secure and rewarding labor. Work should be a vocation, not deadening drudgery. Jobs which *are* basically drudgery should be rotated, with incentives like better pay or shorter

hours. The right to mobility includes “the right to live and work where an individual chooses” and “the right to change jobs or occupations and to receive education or training for new jobs or occupations” (Article II, Section 11). The right to mobility has great educational potential. Living, working, and traveling away from home, in a different environment or country, can enhance personal growth and strengthen social bonds across borders.

Positive motivation to work is supported by a range of social guarantees, namely, all the other rights proposed in *Charter 2000*, which lay the foundation for a decent life for everyone. These include rights to a decent standard of housing, accommodations, food, clothing, utilities; health care, transportation, communication/media, education, culture and the arts, child care; science and technology in the public interest, citizen/consumer power, mobility, a safe, clean, sustainable environment, and security and emergency services (Article II, Sections 2–13).

Satisfaction with the social and personal contributions of work maintains morale, creativity, productivity, and health. It encourages the development of individual and social human potential. And democratic empowerment to make policy in the workplace gives all workers a personal stake in their job and in the society which their jobs help support (Article I, Section 5). The worker is envisioned not as a passive “stakeholder” but as an active citizen.

The policy of free choice in all aspects of employment provoked a heated debate when *Charter 2000* was being drafted. The main argument in opposition was that free choice would encourage irresponsible anti-social behavior, such as refusing to hold down a job and to do one’s fair share, thus provoking resentment of social parasites by responsible workers. A second argument claimed that it ignored the principle of the social contract, in which social benefits are provided by society in exchange for the individual’s labor.

Charter 2000 clearly honors the principle of the social contract, but changes the way it currently operates. The traditional social contract stipulates: first promise to work and (presumably) you will avoid starvation and receive social benefits. The motivation is negative, based on coercion: work or starve, work or lose health coverage, your home, your family. In reality, the coercive social contract cheats more and more people, and even full time workers are pauperized. The so-called positive motivation to work—accumulating excess wealth—is a delusion for all but the very few and in principle is anti-democratic. By contrast, the social contract proposed by *Charter 2000* first guarantees everyone basic social benefits as rights and then offers people the chance to work at jobs where they are personally and socially motivated to make their best contribution.

But then the argument of irresponsible behavior comes in. In this view, positive incentives for work are too weak to guarantee productivity and efficiency. Work is essentially punishment, and people will do anything to avoid it or to do as little as possible. Only coercion makes people productive and

efficient, and once the club of starvation or withheld benefits is withdrawn, people will take the money and run. Too many drop-outs will threaten the viability of society.

In reply to this miserly Calvinist argument, given the degradation of labor over the past century (Braverman [1974] 1998), no one would deserve blame for wanting to be a lazy bum. In the land of the free, too many jobs deserve to be called “slaves.” But there is evidence that in an abundant society, where social guarantees are taken for granted and labor is respected, positive incentives become very powerful, resentment disappears, and the number of bums is minimal. For example, a resident of the Faeroe Islands, which belong to Denmark, was asked about the extensive welfare benefits available to Danish citizens. “Didn’t that encourage people to quit work and loaf? No, he said: that would not be respected. And self-respect was very important in the Faeroes. ‘Yes, we have a few people, you might call them bums, but not so many to be a problem. . . . Such people, you know, can be amusing’” (Skow 1996, 65).

The labor rights section of *Charter 2000* includes a subsection on Fair Trade (Article II, Section 1, par. h), which is the labor and environmentalist answer to the deceptive corporate slogan of global Free Trade. Because corporate globalism degrades the status of labor and the environment in all countries, including the U.S., *Charter 2000*’s labor policies are of necessity international in scope.

Fair Trade proposes to “institute a social tariff system that equalizes trade by gearing tariffs to international standards for workers rights,” and to “level up standards by putting tariff revenues in an international fund for democratic ecological development in poorer countries.” If institutions regulating trade were democratic, international trade agreements could be a tool to deal rationally and fairly with international investment.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, the labor planks of *Charter 2000* promote the improvement of workers’ productivity, satisfaction, creativity, and potential. Productive rewarding labor in the service of social solidarity (Article I, Section 3) is one of the necessary conditions to establish a democratic society (Article I, Section 5) of sustainable abundance (Article I, Section 7) built on a sustainable natural environment (Article I, Sections 8–10; Article II, Section 12).

As a pedagogical proposal, *Charter 2000* puts into practice one of its own planks from the section on the right to education: “stress the role of society and societies in human life, how and why they prosper or fail, whom they benefit; introduce economic class relations into social and historical studies

and disallow it from being censored or suppressed” (Article II, Section 6, paragraph).

Ordinary people, as opposed to trained professionals, must learn and practice the skills of governing, foremost among them the skill of policy-making. *Charter 2000* offers itself as a powerful pedagogical tool, teaching practical and concrete ways of envisioning a desirable future based on progressive principles. Its goal of realizing comprehensive human rights and a functioning democracy, and its strategy of constitutional amendments to implement them remain unique among political platforms. During its fifteen years of offering an uncompromising progressive agenda, it exemplifies steadfastness in developing a long-term project for progressive regeneration.²⁰

The 1996 “Preamble” to *Charter 2000* states: “Instead of being reactive, we must become proactive, seizing the initiative around a set of fundamental principles and persisting in our vision no matter how long its achievement may take.” *Charter 2000* encourages progressives to think big, which includes the goal of taking power and running the government. Progressives should actively shape the economy and society, educate succeeding generations, and unleash people’s cultural creativity.

The labor planks of *Charter 2000* can be viewed as a transitional program. They propose what labor should demand so long as it remains under the iron heel of capital (London 1907).²¹ Once labor takes power, however, a broader perspective can open up, revealing new and perhaps unanticipated possibilities, as well as enhanced, unalienated social relations.

NOTES

1. *Reason and Revolution* [1941] 1960, p. 272, quoted in Reitz (Chapter 12, this volume).

2. A strategy voiced by veteran labor activist Bill Fletcher, Jr. “This is not a moment to think small and it is not a moment to think only on the defensive. This is a moment for big ideas, strategy, and a conception of the counter-offensive” (Fletcher 2011).

3. Student workers, both domestic and foreign, are often defrauded by employers’ false promises. For a domestic example—University of Louisville students whose exploitation by UPS results in high drop-out rates—see Bousquet 2008. For a foreign example—“cultural exchange students” exploited by Hershey Chocolate Company—see Jobs with Justice 2011.

4. The idea of a labor unit across the curriculum has been raised by others. A prominent example is a proposal made by Cary Nelson, President of AAUP, that teachers should “devote one hour each semester in every course to discussing the status and character of campus labor. These issues are relevant to every discipline and every subject, no matter what the catalog course description says.” Introduced by Nelson at the Counter-MLA in January 2011, the proposal was published in *Academe*, the AAUP magazine (Nelson, 2011).

5. The greater portion of tuition and public funding for education now subsidizes private interests; e.g., corporations pay 20 percent of the costs of so called “sponsored research” and the university 80 percent, but corporations receive 100 percent of the benefits, in the form of proprietary research results, royalties from patents, etc. (Manski 2011; also see Soley 1995).

6. “In conformity with the public agenda of right-wing networks, the goal is to remove or silence liberal academics and replace them with ideological conservatives” (Brodsky 2005).

7. In addition, funding for instructional costs remains stagnant, and disciplines which have no access to outside funding—typically humanities and social service oriented programs—are being downsized or eliminated.

8. In the five years since the AAUP report was published the casualization percentage can only have risen.

9. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Adopted by United Nations General Assembly, 1948. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Adopted by United Nations General Assembly, 1966. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Adopted by United Nations General Assembly, 1966.

10. *Charter 2000* had a long and difficult birth. The survey went through ten versions in four years, and until the last minute it appeared as if the platform would never be ratified.

11. A month after *Charter 2000* was ratified thirteen people had become signatories, and later three others added their names. Half the signatories lived in the Kansas City area, while the rest came from eight states—two on each coast and four in the midwest.

12. A few economic, social, and cultural human rights enumerated in the UN Universal Declaration or Covenant can be found scattered in state constitutions. See Wronka 1992.

13. The latest example is the Obama administration's warning to repressive regimes in the Arab world to respect the rights of its protesting citizens, while remaining silent about everyday violations in the U.S. when suppressing dissent at home. Other recent historical examples are the justification of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 as a "humanitarian intervention," and of the invasion of Afghanistan as a means to protect women's rights against the Taliban. Also see Bricmont 2006. Repelled by the tradition of casuistry (U.S. imperial aggression as making the world safe for democracy, etc.), some progressives understandably have abandoned human rights as a politically viable concept.

14. Constitutional amendments regarding voting are worded in a negative way, e.g., "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State"—15th Amendment "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude"; 19th Amendment "on account of sex"; 24th Amendment "by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax"; 26th Amendment "on account of age." The 14th Amendment only specifies penalties "when the right to vote . . . is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State."

15. The document was developed at the same time that the Labor Party was discussing its own national platform, and it is indebted to that discussion. See Labor Party 1996; *Labor Party Discussion Bulletin* 1995, 1996; "Labor Party Platform Discussion" 1996. As a not too distant precedent, in the early 1990s the locked out Staley workers in Decatur, Illinois, quoted the *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in their defense. Twenty years later the Excluded Worker Congress is seeking to expand current narrow conceptions of labor rights to the broader context of human rights (Goldberg and Jackson 2011).

16. The right to a job, of course, is not the falsely labeled "right to work." "Right to work" means exemption from joining a union, often while receiving union benefits, and is a tool to weaken organized labor. Organized labor opposes "right to work" campaigns and laws with the notion of "rights at work."

17. Schor 1992 and Aronowitz and DeFazio 1994 offer similar proposals.

18. In spring 2011 Yoshie Furuhashi, editor of MRZine, proposed a broad program resting on an ecological foundation. "(1) Decrease per capita energy use in the North and (2) increase it in the South. That is necessary to bring 'equity' to energy use. To achieve (1), shortening working time, lowering the retirement age, lengthening the time of education etc. is essential. The work week of 20 hours per week should be more than enough. For retirement I suggest 50 at full benefits. Education should be free, and social wages should be paid to students, all the way through tertiary education. The key point is to consume the benefits of higher productivity as 'more free time,' not consumption of more goods. To achieve (2) with as little impact as possible, first of all, it is necessary to educate and empower women, which will decrease the birth rate. (This is a global trend that has been going on for some time, but it can and should be accelerated.)" Achievement of this program requires "democratic planning and global cooperation," since we must "reconstitute how we live on a large enough scale to make a difference" (Furuhashi 2011).

19. Council of Europe, *European Social Charter* 1961, 1996.

20. In August 2011 there appeared other proposals for progressive agendas. For example, the liberal-oriented “Contract for the American Dream” is sponsored by a network of seventy organizations, with input from 1600 house meetings (“Contract” 2011). In the Jobs with Justice proposal cited above Bill Fletcher wrote: “We need to be thinking in terms of winning a pro-worker government; global fairness between nations and for working people; building power for working people; and expanding democracy” (Fletcher 2011). James Petras suggested: “A comprehensive activist political education program that demonstrates that progressive social reforms are feasible and fundable . . . can be converted into organization and direct action” (Petras 2011).

21. James Petras implicitly concurs: “Corporate political power and absolute tyrannical control over the workplace has increased fear, insecurity and virtual terror among employees facing increased speed-ups and arbitrary elimination of any say in health and workplace safety, work schedules, over and under time workloads” (Petras 2011).

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Chapter Four

“Vote for a Job”

*A Short History of Contemporary Strategic Failure on
the Organized Left, with Lessons for the Present*

Fred Whitehead

An attentive reader of the detailed exposition of the *Charter 2000* project, discussed by David Brodsky elsewhere in this volume, will note that in spite of an extensive circulation of the document to some 800 individuals and organizations, it was not endorsed by more than a few persons. A few Left organizations printed it, but a proper consideration was everywhere lacking. This is not, I contend, a weakness of the document, but of the general debility of the Left in our time, including both small and large elements of the Labor movement.

However, the Right during this same period displayed no such weaknesses; on the contrary, the Tea Party movement, supported by the considerable economic resources of various capitalists, organized widely, and in the Congressional elections of 2010, rose to prominence and political power. To this day, the Tea Party, though somewhat weakened in the election of 2012, remains a dominant force, especially in the Republican Party contingent in the Congress.

Motivated by the 2010 debacle, I resolved to focus on a key element of *Charter 2000*, namely the guarantee of employment, as a way to enliven an opposition to the Right, and to provide a rallying point for Labor and the Left. Surely, I thought, given the calamity of long-term chronic unemployment throughout the United States, this was a crucial moment for addressing a comprehensive, decisive solution. Here is the text of the proposal I made soon after the 2010 election:

A CALL TO ACTION

After every election, the winners and losers naturally reflect on what happened, and what is ahead. Given the worst losses for the Democrats in Congress in the last 50 years, some serious re-thinking seems called for.

President Obama is being blamed, but it seems clear that the Democratic Party, especially the Blue Dog faction, is at fault. Fortunately, that faction lost half its members. But many observers from a rather wide range of political viewpoints are emphasizing the lack of engagement, a failure to meet the needs of the people.

How did this come about? It's complicated, but surely a significant development goes back to the 1980s and the era of the so-called Reagan Revolution, actually a counterrevolution. Prior to that time, the language of Rights still had currency. But the well-funded and pervasive think-tanks of the Reactionaries launched a campaign to eliminate this language, relabeling it as Entitlements. The people were thrown on the defensive, politically, educationally, and in the courts. Unfortunately, this campaign largely succeeded. Few nowadays use the language of Rights. It is time, as the late poet Thomas McGrath said, to "take back the language," to expropriate it.

What I'd like to propose as the centerpiece of such a campaign is a Constitutional amendment guaranteeing the Right to Employment.

This is not merely an abstract Utopian idea. It is deeply rooted in the American experience. Notably, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called for it in his Message to Congress, January 11, 1944, in a Second Bill of Rights. Point #1 was: "The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the Nation." Among other Rights were the right to housing, medical care and education.

In his recent book, entitled *The Second Bill of Rights: FDR's Unfinished Revolution and Why We Need It More than Ever*, University of Chicago professor Cass R. Sunstein reviews the background for Roosevelt's message, and notes that Eleanor Roosevelt assisted in the campaign to have similar language in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Especially in Article 23: "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment."

Sunstein explains how the extension of Rights campaign emerged out of the chaos and dislocation of the Great Depression and World War II. But in the 1980s, political Reactionaries plotted to gut the language of Rights, including the various social programs of the New Deal, and even attempted to destroy Social Security. While Social Security and similar programs like Medicare have survived, even those are under attack.

There are, therefore, formidable obstacles. Changing the Constitution is a prolonged, difficult process. But change it we must, no matter how demanding it may be.

Putting the right to employment into the Constitution would mean a guarantee to all that they have a secure place in our society. It would not be subject to the whims of this or that President or Congress. It would become part of our "organic law."

The “Establishment” and all its media agree that we must face an indefinite period of “structural unemployment” in the range of 10 percent of the population—actually more like 15–20 percent. Millions of young people have no real prospects at all. That is why so many of them did not vote in this last election.

If we have this Right in the Constitution, when you go to the Employment office, you come out with a job, if not in the private sector, then in the public one, in new forms of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) or the Works Project Administration (WPA).

The respected Chicago artist Peggy Lipschutz recalls finding work in the WPA. You got a job on the basis that you were an artist. You didn’t apply for some grant and just hope to be awarded one. Hundreds of artists all around the nation went to work in these programs.

Such a Right would at once eliminate barbarous competition among races and generations. The campaign to enact it would engage literally millions of people, on their own behalf and on behalf of all. And we would “take back” the language, the ancient language of Rights, arising from our own original Bill of Rights and extending it to meet the needs of the present day.

Preparatory to securing an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, we should investigate the various options in States and even localities, for direct citizen-sponsored Propositions and Initiatives. Sometimes it has proven easier to enact these at the State levels, before they are passed at the Federal level. But we should not lose sight of the goal: transforming not only our thinking, but our acting on the broadest national scale.

* * *

I provided my return address to this text, and it was published at the *People’s World* website on November 10, 2010, as well as on the *Portside* discussion list. The *People’s World* is associated with the Communist Party, whereas *Portside* is a project of the Committees of Correspondence, which emerged from the CP in the early 1990s. The *Portside* posting resulted in a few responses, though the CofC, like the CP, produced no organizational response.

However, at that point, I decided to attempt to continue the discussion, such as it was, and produced what was intended to be the first of a series of bulletins:

Vote for a Job: Bulletin #1

November 18, 2010

The Whole Game, or Nothing

I should confess at once that I’m not a sports fan, but the other day it occurred to me out of the blue that the idea of a Constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to a job has an aspect that bears on games or game theory.

It goes like this: while the Right wing has had strategic plans in place since before Reagan became President, the Left has failed to come up with anything that can take them on. Failure to have a strategy at all means failure in the long run, and often in the short run too. I'm not going to try here to explain why this failure has happened, though it's an interesting problem in itself.

Look at it this way: In most sports, there's an offense, and a defense working in every game. Any person or team that only has a defense is doomed to defeat eventually. In part, lacking an offense, you don't ever score any points. Also, if you are only defensive, your opponent on the offensive not only has the momentum, but he can study your defense and pick out the weaknesses in it. In a purely defensive strategy, however good that may be, there is, then, an inherent weakness. Of course, in any sport, great defense is critically important. And having a poorly designed or executed offense has its perils as well.

The liberals, the Democratic Party, and what survives of the Left share this common weakness. For much of time, maybe almost all the time lately, they are forced—no, they force themselves—into a defensive position. They cannot even imagine an offense, so weakness and failure becomes ingrained in them.

Most people have the feeling that President Obama is a decent fellow and all that, but they cannot understand why he has allowed himself to be rolled—by the banks, the corporations, and the moneyed class generally. “Why doesn't he do something?” they ask. But the problem runs deeper than that: why don't the people do something? All great radical and progressive periods—not just revolutions, but reform movements like the New Deal—take the offensive, they generate visions of hope which turn into reality, not just talk.

So, a movement to enact a Constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to a job would change the whole equation, it would take the initiative, and it would become an offensive operation, aimed at a victory for millions of people.

* * *

I circulated the original Call and this Bulletin to various people who might be considered progressive: Jim Hightower, the radio commentator, Richard Trumka at the AFL-CIO, and Bob King, head of the United Auto Workers. No response. During that period the University of California professor Robert Reich was regularly writing newspaper columns on the employment crisis, but after a considerable effort to contact him, he offered only the most tepid and incidental endorsement of the idea, and of course he never wrote about it in his columns. Not even the National Jobs for All Coalition responded. The lesson of this whole effort was negative. Like *Charter 2000*, it might be published or circulated here and there, but it never took hold, and essentially perished through simple apathy.

Curiously, back in the middle of the nineteenth century, the radical labor reformer, George Henry Evans, led a decades-long campaign under the rubric: “Vote Yourself a Farm”—which eventually resulted in the Homestead

Act of 1862. Evans died in 1856, and thus did not live to see the fruition of his work. I purposely patterned the call to "Vote for a Job" after Evans' campaign slogan. Of course, hardly anyone today recalls Evans, or the role of the Homestead Act in American history. Yet this same history clearly demonstrates again and again that dramatic large-scale ideas have resulted in real social advance: the Populist movement of the 1890s, the campaigns against child labor, for women's rights, and so on. Now all that is not even a memory.

By the 1950s, and the advent of what Henry Luce called "The American Century," prosperity was widely hailed by liberal intellectuals like Daniel Bell; "old" ideologies like socialism were now deemed irrelevant. In his "Letter to the New Left," of 1960, C. Wright Mills challenged the liberal rhetoric about no-more-ideology, and declared that it "is on the way out because it stands for the refusal to work out an explicit political philosophy." Admirable as Mills' confidence was, it has proven to be a voice in the wilderness. Failure to think strategically, or even to begin a discussion, will entail a continuation of the present failure of the Left and the Labor movement in the United States. Or to express it more positively, the Left and Labor can never even begin to revive until they commence truly strategic thinking which alters the fundamentals of social action in this country.

Chapter Five

U.S. Capitalism and Militarism in Crisis

Our Political Work Today

Douglas Dowd

The critical analysis to follow had its beginnings well before the recent presidential election. If the White House had been won by the Republicans, the ongoing and anticipated dangers to be examined here would have been accelerated and worsened. As will be discussed at length, their nature and causes were created in decades of both Democrat and Republican political control, as industrial capitalism's ways and means "matured."

Capitalism cannot function without continuous economic expansion and push for "more"—more buying by people; more profits for business. Expansion has two faces: the continuing increase of production and sales by business at home, and the geographic expansion fed by nationalism and militarism. The U.S.A. viewed European and Japanese geographic expansion as "imperialism," but saw our own bloody expansion over North America as "moving westward" and our endless military actions in the Philippines, Cuba, Chile, Africa, et al. for their well-being. Now we see our actions in the Middle East and Central Asia as protecting ourselves from "terrorists" (Bacevich 2008).

As the twentieth century began, the six most powerful capitalist nations were also the leading imperialist powers. The stimuli of imperialism for Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan were to insure raw materials and cheap labor for their countries. The U.S.A. met those needs early and easily "at home" with the rich lands stolen from the natives, and the cheap labor of slavery and of immigrants. Taken together, our "free resources" and cheap labor would have made us Number One *without* geographic expansion,

but from the 1890s on, we expanded overseas at least as greedily and cruelly as the other five of the “big six.”

Thus, the world was fertilized for many small and the two very large wars: ten million known deaths during World War I and more than six times that in World War II. Add to those the deaths of Chinese, Japanese, and American military, plus those of civilians and the numberless millions of those wounded and lives wrecked before, during, and after the wars.

Capitalism took hold in the seventeenth century, gained strength and spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth and matured in the twentieth. However, if “maturity” signifies getting wiser and settling down, capitalism is still a reckless teenager. To be sure, always new technologies have greatly modernized and supplied everything, but their applications are always less “adult” in 1) what is produced, for whom and why, 2) social and environmental harms, and 3) endless militarism. I look first to the insanity and injustices of industrial capitalism as the twentieth century unfolded.

From capitalism’s birth—and except for a brief interruption after World War II—its economics, politics, and sociology have been tightly intertwined by an always smaller number of giant corporations which own and increasingly dominate not only the means and contents of production, but also government, the media, and social standards. The U.S. economy is now run by always fewer and more gigantic companies. They use more complex means for more sales and profits, critically assisted by increasingly seductive techniques for inducing us to buy *more!* That in turn has been intensified and deepened by the transformation of Wall Street into a branch of Las Vegas, with the permission of the government of Nevada and the U.S. Congress. That could be ignored if done by criminals, but its doers were big business and bought and paid for politics whose gains and harms make traditional criminals seem childish.

INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM AND INSTABILITY

The twentieth century for the U.S. economy began with a collapse in 1907 and an upswing in 1909. From then until America felt the impact of war prosperity in 1915, our economic history was largely one of brief spurts and recessions. If the first World War had not come along, the decade 1910–1920 would have gone down as an extraordinarily depressed one. But the war did come—in the nick of time—and the picture changed from probable stagnation to a boom. In 1915 the first great wave of auto-mobilization began, rolled on during the war, and was producing all the multifarious by-products and indirect effects: suburbanization, road building, secondary industries, etc. There was a tenfold increase of sales from 1919 to 1929 (2.3 to 23 million). Meanwhile, the rate of capital investment reached an unsustainably

high level: at the cost of the disastrous collapse of 1929 (Baran and Sweezy 1966).

The decade from 1929 to World War II was marked by an economy in which productive capacities were substantially unused, sales declined, and unemployment rose to drastic heights and stayed there. It bears repeating that the unemployment rate of the U.S.A. measures only those *known* to be seeking jobs, ignores those who have given up in despair, *and* counts as fully employed those who were full-time but are now only part-time. When the U.S. first began to measure unemployment in the 1930s, it was done in ways which suggest a conscious aim to understate. For example, in our ongoing recession, the official rate has varied from just under 10 percent to just under 8 percent. However, if we used the methods common to Western Europe since World War II, the rate as this is written in 2012 would be 17–18 percent.

In the first half of the twentieth century, only the UK and the U.S.A. could hold back disastrous socio-political upheavals. They were the richest, and only they had full access to the required resources of the lands and resources of native peoples: all over the globe by the UK, all over North America by the U.S.A. When France, Germany, Italy, and Japan sought to industrialize in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, what was left for them was such that they militarized their politics both at home and abroad and, in interwar years, became totalitarian and fascist. In a world dominated by capitalism, nationalism, and major political conflicts between left, middle, and right, it was only a question of time before a major war would erupt. As the nineteenth century ended, the U.S.A. was already galloping toward becoming the most powerful economy of “the big six.” The only substantial victor of World War I was the U.S.A. For Europe, in addition to its wartime casualties and damages, coming around the corner after a brief prosperity was serious inflation *and* an even more serious wave of left and right political upheavals. The U.S.A. had suffered many injured and killed, but our “many” was a small percentage of the British, French, German, Italian, and Russian dead and wounded. Instead, we benefited from the war greatly, qualitatively and quantitatively. In its three years of the war, U.S. exports of both manufactures and agricultural products grew substantially and transformed what in 1914 was moving toward a serious recession into a substantial economic expansion. The war also assisted at least as much in qualitative developments, as the technologies of warfare translated easily into the consumer goods of peacetime, especially in the electrical and automotive realms.

Although the 1920s in the U.S.A. were called “the prosperity decade,” they were hellish years for the majority. The economy was surfing on a tidal wave of speculation at home and abroad. Then came the crash of 1929. The world of the 1930s was greatly different from today; and its economic trou-

bles led to legislation to prevent the repetition. As will be seen below, in the 1980s that legislation began to be reversed and was fully gotten rid of in the 1990s, when Clinton (Democrat) was in the White House. It is not encouraging that his main adviser for getting rid of those safety laws (Lawrence Summers) also became Obama's financial expert.

In sum, the innovations and hailed triumphs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought about a large handful of poisoned societies, economic collapse, and two major wars. If there had been such a thing as a disinterested parties as the second world war ended, they could sensibly have said, "Well, those people have finally learned their lesson: it's time to leave all that behind us and to construct a safer and saner world for ourselves." We of "the big six" did that for some years after World War II. But, as will be seen in what follows, we have lost our way again and are now edging toward an always more dangerous economic and military world.

World War II (1939–1945) was the most disastrous war in history in numbers of dead, wounded, and lives distorted. During, and after the war most nations suffered both political and social upheaval. Except for Japan and the U.S.A., the economies and politics of the "big six" had been badly distorted by World War I and much more so by World War II (this time including Japan). Although casualties were enormous for all concerned in both wars, they were also manna from heaven for the U.S.A. World War II made it the uncontested ruler over the world: until tomorrow? As all others of "the six" collapsed, the U.S.A. expanded to become infinitely stronger economically, militarily, and politically. Soon after World War II, most of the rich countries underwent years of socio-economic reforms which substantially improved the lives of half or more of their people; for a while. Along the way, the popular pressures which had brought about those desirable changes brought with them other developments; first and most in the U.S.A.: 1) consumerism's endless and often senseless buying and borrowing; 2) the transformation of the economy into one dominated by finance instead of production; 3) the political activities which had produced desirable reforms were shoved aside by consumer passions and debt concerns; 4) Wall St. came to dominate both the economy and politics, and it shifted from being the most conservative sector of the economy into a gambling casino.

In the decades beginning with the 1970s, the world economy became an always riskier source of economic well-being. "Globalization" altered from being a tendency into becoming an ideology. Further below I will focus upon the recent past and present of this century, and what sits behind the foregoing generalization will be pursued at length. But now I turn to the post-World War II *wars* of the U.S.A., as its historic aggressive habits worsened and spread around the world. The U.S.A. has not yet been the historical worst in such matters, but it threatens to become so.

THE U.S. AT WAR: 1945–2000

The several discussions to follow will focus upon only some of the outrageous military exploits of the U.S.A. since World War II, beginning with our first actions in Vietnam during World War II, which were honorable; then, later I take up our second involvement there, which was disgraceful. Officially, the U.S. war in Vietnam began well after World War II; unofficially it began *during* World War II. I know because I was doing air-sea rescue in the area. Vietnam had become a French colony long before World War II. When it was taken over by the Japanese there was little resistance in the south, but much in the north for Vietnam's independence (led by Ho Chi Minh). During the war, the independence movement was involved in two actions relevant to this discussion: 1) the movement's struggle against both the French and the Japanese; 2) its assistance in rescuing U.S. planes downed by the Japanese. I was involved in the latter, helped in the north by Ho Chi Minh's people and a small, group of U.S. men of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) which, after the war, descended into becoming the CIA. When our planes were shot down, the OSS men helped us in the rescue work—side by side with the Vietnamese independence fighters—against both the French and the Japanese. Soon after, when the war was drawing to a close, the U.S.A. assisted the French *against* the independence movement by shipping French soldiers and weaponry to the north in ships with the U.S. flag. At the first U.S. docking, the Vietnamese—assuming the U.S.A. was in support of their independence struggle—greeted the dockings with cheers and signs saying *Welcome Uncle Sam!!* The cheers stopped when the French began to kill them with what was unloaded (Young 1991; Wittner 1978).

Korea

Soon after World War II ended, the U.S.A chose to participate in the war in Korea. Ruled over years by the Japanese, the Koreans were of course eager to build a government of their own; instead they got a terrible war and two totalitarian governments: the North supported by the U.S.S.R., the South by the U.S.A.: the first step of a horrible "Cold War." Whatever the struggle meant for the U.S.S.R. (still weak from World War II) and the U.S.A. (stronger than ever), it was a massive disaster for the Koreans. In essence the war was a fight between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., but the basis for a tragic disaster for the Koreans: a totalitarian communist society for the North, and (for many years) a totalitarian fascist society for the South. We can only guess what would have happened if Korea had been left alone, rather than becoming a victim of the Cold War.

Vietnam (again)

While the U.S.A. was fighting openly in Korea it also began its second involvement in Vietnam. With the world war over and the French weakened, the independence movement in Vietnam gained strength in what became a war between the north and the south of Vietnam; basically a struggle between left and right. As it went on, and Ho Chi Minh's troops were winning, the U.S.A. joined the fight against them. At first the U.S.A. was only providing weaponry and "directions" to the South, but when it became clear that the corruption of its rightist government was self-destructive, we stepped up our secret operations on land and sea. That failing, after many years, we had to come clean by declaring war, with this dirty lie: "The North had attacked a U.S. ship." It took many years and the loss of millions of lives in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and thousands of U.S. dead and wounded, before the U.S.A. gave up. Our officials blundered on the roof of the U.S. State Department there, waiting to be rescued. It has never been officially admitted, but for the first time in history, the U.S.A. had lost a war (Young 1991).

Cuba

For centuries it was a rich holding of the Spanish, but in 1902 the U.S.A. (as with its conflict with Spain's control of the Philippines) declared itself "the protector" of Cuba. As the century went on, the ruler of Cuba became Batista, a fascist gangster. In 1959 he was overthrown by Fidel Castro's revolutionaries. When Castro's political involvements began, he was an idealistic leftist. After years of U.S. efforts to end Cuba's independence, he hardened politically to the point where his younger self would have led a movement to replace him. Had the U.S.A. looked the other way when it lost Cuba, who knows what then? But we didn't, and Castro ruled with an iron hand until illness led him to hand power to his brother. The U.S.A., or more exactly, the U.S. business interests in Cuba, sought to overthrow the Castro government with a landing on Cuba's shores when JFK was in the White House. The landing was a bloody U.S. disaster, with many injured, killed, and imprisoned. Since then the U.S.A. has concentrated on doing what it can to weaken Cuba's economy while, at the same time holding on to Cuban land and Guantánamo, its U.S. prison and its cruel mistreatment of its inhabitants. The U.S.-supported invasion of 1961 should have served as warning to the people of the U.S.A. that their government can sink very low without a second thought. But we did it soon again in South America.

Chile

In the early 1970s the U.S.A. contributed to the violent overthrow of the popularly elected Chilean government and the connected death of its Prime



Figure 5.1. “Merry Christmas from Vietnam [1969]” by Jerome Heckmann. Art reproduced with permission of Jerome Heckmann.

Minister Salvador Allende. Then Pinochet, the unabashed fascist and leader of the overthrow, went on to rule, brutally, with the nod of Uncle Sam and U.S. corporations. With the U.S.A. standing by, Pinochet tortured and murdered over 3,000 Chileans and imprisoned thousands.

Iraq

This will be very short, although the war has been very long. If Iraq were not rich in oil reserves, the U.S.A. would never have given it much attention. Rich it is, and attention we gave and still give—no matter what. Although it was a heart-breaking fascist-controlled nation when the U.S.A. intervened, it

was the oil, not politics which did it. We had to have a more acceptable reason, so Bush Junior's staff manufactured one: "WMD" (weapons of mass destruction). It worked, and not until much later was it discovered that the White House lied, *knowing* there were *no* such weapons. Many thousands of Iraqis and U.S. soldiers were wounded or killed, and at least two million Iraqis fled their country in fear. Despite U.S. declarations that the war was won and done, Iraq is today still a nation in chaos. And we are still close by, ready to return.

Afghanistan

The "official" position is that U.S. military involvement there began eleven years ago, but the real and sordid story is thirty years ago. In 1979 President Carter's National Security Advisor, Brzezinski ("Zbig"), persuaded him to sign the first of several directives for the CIA to supply arms to a small group in Afghanistan called "the Taliban." It was done. Why? In 1979 the Soviet Union didn't want any monkey business to take place next door, so Zbig had a bright idea. In discussing and bragging about it twenty years later in a radio interview with the French *Nouvel Observateur* he said: "Our stated intention in arming the Taliban in July 1979 was to draw the Russians into the Afghan trap. We didn't push them to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would." He was right, and three months later the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan, guns firing. Ten years later, when they left in defeat, Zbig wrote to Carter: "Now we have given the U.S.S.R. *its* Vietnam



Figure 5.2. "Marching PFC Bradley Manning off to the brig" by Jerome Heckmann. Art reproduced with permission of Jerome Heckmann.

war.” What he didn’t know was that once the U.S.A. got in there—secretly or not—we had given *ourselves* another Vietnam. The Taliban were a weak little group until *the U.S.* armed them and they gained war experience. After the U.S.S.R. left, the Taliban backed into the shadows, but they soon got the smart idea of inducing the poor Afghan farmers to grow opium plants, which they now control. Today 90 percent of opium comes from Afghanistan, enriches the Taliban, and pays for its huge army fighting its one-time pal the U.S.A. Not only have we given ourselves another Vietnam, but in our usage of Pakistan in the Afghan war, we have also made an ever-enlarging enemy of their people and much of their government. Next?

That’s enough dirty war news for a while; but there is now the all too strong possibility of another U.S. war: this one with Iran, urged on us by Israel. If and when that happens, its basis was born as World War II ended and the U.S.A.’s relationships with the newborn Israel began. A relevant introduction follows here.

ISRAEL AND THE U.S.A.

Among the many tragic doings of human history, one that stands out is the all too often cruel mistreatment of Jews—of which my mother was one—climaxed by Hitler’s Germans, with many terrors by Poles, French, Italians, Americans, et al. It was thus quite sensible that, during and immediately after World War II, Jews would seek a land of their own in Israel; land peopled mostly by Palestinians and earlier under the control of the UK. Weakened severely by World War II and then again in 1948, the UK packed up and left the land of Israel. Although there was some expectation that a peaceful agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians could be reached, it has been the opposite. Since 1948 there has been one bitter conflict after another between them, with support from outside to both: from the Arab world for the Palestinians, from the U.S.A. for the Israelis. So the question arises: Why has the U.S.A. in the past and present given Israel unblinking support, no matter what? There is more than one explicable and unpleasant answer: 1) As World War II ended and the Middle East ceased to be under the control of the UK, an important opportunity for U.S. and other oil companies to expand in that region was provided. 2) Given the already existing and rising tensions between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., Israel was also a vital strategic spot. 3) The significant Jewish political group in the U.S.A. has successfully pressed our government to take Israel’s side, no matter what the issue, no matter what the dangers. 4) For many decades, the U.S.A. and Israel have provided each other support in and out of the UN, also no matter what the issue (Krugman 2003).

That history has created dangerous conditions in the Middle East. In consequence, and with some reason, the “all powerful” U.S.A has come to be the servant of Israel. That could be OK were it merely a matter of Israel working against Jew haters. It is not. The most terrifying result of the U.S.A.-Israel relationship is that Israel is now under the leadership and control of right-wing fanatics who see Iran as their main enemy, taking the position that Iran will strike them first with nuclear weapons unless they are stopped. If that “stopping” takes hold it would have these steps: 1) Israel would bomb Iran. 2) Though Israel has a big army, it could not defeat Iran on the ground. 3) The U.S.A. must finish the job.

There is something even worse, but not admitted by Israel or the U.S.A.: Israel has nuclear bombs. Even the fear of them being used raises the possibility of stimulating a broader nuclear war. That may sound fanciful (as would have been World War II before 1939): it is not seen as fanciful by either Israel or Iran. Add this: as tensions rise between Israel and Iran, they have in common that they are dominated by recklessly militaristic politics. It is time overdue for the U.S.A. to reconsider its own position. The U.S. must convince the Israelis and the Iranians that neither friendship nor enmity is here to stay. The U.S. must work harder for peace, must convince both Iran and Israel and our own government that we can and must find peaceful solutions: that not only would an Iranian war be disastrous for all concerned but that it would all too likely be a dangerous step toward World War III. As I write in December 2012, Israel and Palestine have already engaged in an eight-day war. If this were to resume and involve others, it could become much worse.

Now we return to the main troubling realms in today’s world: the economy, inequality, big business, taxes, war, and the environment.

THE ECONOMY

In the U.S.A. it was once thought that “the economy is ours,” but it has always been “theirs.” Moreover, as the twentieth century ended and the twenty-first began, the economy, the government, and the social air were increasingly ruled directly or indirectly by an always tighter minority of “them.” *Item:* In 1990, Wall Street’s *Fortune Magazine* revealed that “500 financial companies have revenues equal to more than two-thirds of the production of the entire economy, exceeding that of the next two largest national economies (Japan and Germany).” Add this: in the early 1970s the financial sector was subordinate to Congress and the total of financial trades in the U.S.A. over an entire year was a dollar amount less than GNP. By the 1990s, however, through a 24-hour-a-day cascade of electronic hedging and speculation, the financial sector had swollen to an annual volume of trading 30 to 40

times greater than the dollar turnover of “the real economy.” Each *month* several dozen huge financial firms trade electronically a sum of currencies, futures, derivatives, stocks and bonds that exceed the entire GNP of the United States (Phillips 1994).

That was in 1994, only the beginning of always worsening processes, with always more political assistance from a GOP or Democratic White House or president. *Items*: Clinton (Dem.) was president in most of the 1990s. His main financial advisers and officials were Wall Street heavies. Now, Obama (Dem.) is president. His main financial advisers—Robert Rubin, Lawrence Summers, and Timothy Geithner—have long been pals of Wall Street. Headline, *New York Times*, Jan 22, 2011: “General Electric Chief Immelt is to lead Obama job push.” And, the article noted, Immelt will continue to run GE. He is noted for having been the leader of the anti-labor and tough market policies of GE, arguably the single most powerful and socially irresponsible of U.S. corporations. In that same week, Obama appointed William Daley—top executive of JPMorgan Chase—Chief of Staff. The 1970s and 1980s saw a slowing of the growth rate of the capitalist economy at the center of the system, resulting in ballooning finance acting as a compensatory factor. Lacking an outlet in production, capital took refuge in speculation: debt-leveraged finance (a bewildering array of options, futures, derivatives, swaps, etc.).

INEQUALITY

In the realms of today’s socio-economy, inequality’s consequences are the most harmful. Inequality among humans has of course existed for much of human history. But, although inherent to capitalism, it has been intensified today by the domination of a few hundred giant corporations and their domination of income, wealth, and power. In the late nineteenth century the inequalities of capitalism began to meet noticeable opposition in the main nations; it was quickly stifled. Not until after the horrors and insanity of two world wars—with capitalist rivalries at their roots—could the prestige and political power of the capitalist class be weakened and challenged. Although some of that was done after World War II, basic reforms were soon smothered, and there is now more inequality than ever in both the rich and poor nations, with but a few exceptions (e.g., in Sweden).

That takes us to those who dominate just about everything: the economy, politics, much of our “spare time,” and most of our ideals.

BIG BUSINESS

Back in the 1920s a handful of economists noted a qualitative shift in the economy: although in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were several big companies and a few giant companies like Standard Oil who dominated their own markets, and although all too many businesses exploited their workers, the economy was not dominated by *big* business: yet. No later than after World War II and partially facilitated by it, the march toward what we now have had taken hold: domination of both the economy and the social system by a few hundred companies. Whether because we are too busy buying and borrowing, sweating and worrying at our jobs, or just plain mind-washed, we do not live up to the rule that a democracy can function as such *only* if a strong majority of its people are regularly involved in paying attention and acting upon politics. In the process, whether in state and/or local and/or Congress, for decades we left the door wide open for corrupt politicians to open wide the doors for the military and the business world. We are learning the hard way that unless “we the people” are actively involved in politics we pay a high price.

The business world has created research groups to advise the powerful what to do to keep society moving backward. A major consequence has been the displacement of relatively progressive politicians by conservatives in the U.S.A., the UK and Western Europe. From the 1970s up to the present, as the U.S.A. greatly lowered taxes for the rich and big business that same U.S.A. wiped out badly needed social programs for the nation and the poor: as the White House and legislators of both parties have bowed to big business and its profiteers. The taxes of the rest of us have gone up while, at the same time, governmental policies for our well-being and safety have been neglected or canceled. When Obama won the presidency, it was expected that the tide was turning for the better in the U.S.A. But until very recently Obama has taken considerably more direction from the right-center than from the left-center. Those tendencies will not be substantially reversed unless and until the decent people as a whole turn their energies more toward politics. That requires a combination of paying closer attention to government and becoming politicized; made more difficult to the degree that almost all of us are kept looking in the wrong directions by the media (McChesney 2004).

TAXES

Almost all of us grunt at the very word. Surely we know we cannot have a safe and decent society without an active government, which we create and work politically to insure that income distribution be in accord with the needs

of middle and low incomes and the poor. But it is not us, but rather the rich who run the economy and the government, and they see to it that they get low tax rates and that the rest of us pay up the difference. As the 1960s ended and the 1970s began, Congress (and state governments) had been taken over by business and the rich, and that meant two overlapping changes from the reformist years of the 1950s–1960s: 1) social expenditures meeting the needs and possibilities of the nation, the middle class and the poor were cut or ended; 2) the desires and fortunes of the rich and powerful were granted, and we got what was left. You don't have to take my word for it; here's what *billionaire* Warren Buffett had to say about it in August, 2011, in his article "Stop coddling the super-rich":

While the poor and middle class fight for us, we mega-rich continue to get our extraordinary tax breaks. Some of us are investment managers who earn billions from our daily labors but are allowed to classify our incomes as "carried interest," thereby getting a bargain 15% tax rate: others own stock index futures for 10 minutes and have 60% of their gains taxed at 15% as if they had been long-term investors. My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress. It's time for our government to get serious about shared sacrifice. Billionaires like me should pay more taxes. (*New York Times*, August 15, 2011)

WARS

For a while after World War II it was hoped for and assumed that we had learned to insist "No more wars!" Especially was that so in Europe. The hope was sustained only for a while, but soon betrayed by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in Korea and the U.S.A. in Vietnam. The U.S.A. had the economic strength to make war *and* to stimulate and strengthen its economy, but the U.S.S.R. did not. Nevertheless, although its war deaths had been the highest of all participants in the war, they continued, no matter. And the door was opened for decades for the very hot "Cold War" (La Feber 1976).

For the U.S.A. the postwar economic and political weaknesses of the other five of the "big six" (UK et al.) allowed us to expand our power over what had been the imperialized world. In doing so we wrecked whatever possibilities history's victims had for a better world (Williams 1980). As the twenty-first century opened, the U.S.A. had an economy as militarized as it had been in World War II (Bacevich 2008). World War II was for survival; now wars are for expansion, greed, and "*machismo*" (Young 1991; Zinn 2000).

Since the war in Korea, the U.S.A. has taken center stage, beginning with Vietnam and continuing with the endless insane wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with, now, the all too likely war with Iran. As the former wars have gone on

they have also produced a group of conflicts publicized as “wars on terrorism.” It rarely, if ever, occurs to the U.S.A. that we and the other strong nations have long been seen as “terrorists” or worse by the people of the Middle East and Central Asia who for centuries have been ruled over, exploited, enslaved, and murdered by outsiders; the U.S.A. included.

After World War II, given the weakness of their European dominators, it was reasonably thought the long-exploited peoples would be able to rule themselves. If they had not been sitting upon the world’s largest deposits of rich resources (oil at the top) their hopes could have been fulfilled. But oil is more vital in the modern world than gold, silver, coal, and iron mines were in history (Everest 2004; Heinberg 2003). The struggle to control those resources broke all records after World War II, dominated by the U.S.A., for the Europeans and the UK who had controlled the areas didn’t have the strength to hold on to their prized robberies.

Thus, what could have become genuinely independent nations were kept from it with bribes and, where necessary, guns. There were new governments in the entire region, but their precious mineral deposits became or remained under the control of outsiders and leaders corrupted by, mostly, the U.S.A. Then there was and is Israel: in those same postwar years Israel became the homeland for Jews, both for the small number who had been there all along and the millions fleeing the horrors of Europe; and Israel was reborn. From its first years it sought and obtained substantial support from the U.S.A., prompted by its well organized and financed Jewish organizations and even more by the value to the U.S.A of having a strong ally in that region. The relationships of the U.S.A. with Israel, and the attitudes and behavior of the Israelis toward its non-Jewish inhabitants have for decades systematically stolen territory from Palestinians and made their lives difficult: a cruel copy of the mistreatment suffered by Jews in Europe and from which they had fled. As this is written in December 2012, it is all too likely that Israel is intent upon treating the Palestinians in ways they themselves suffered earlier; another tragedy.

So, as the twenty-first century took hold, the U.S.A was caught up in unjustified wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and our military/political arrangements with Israel could well take us into a war with Iran. Israel not only complains that Iran is building atomic weaponry (which Israel itself has), but it also does what it can to hold back anything that might reduce the political conflicts between Iran and the U.S.A. That this could lead to a war which might serve as the first step toward a wider war is not only dangerous but disgraceful behavior by both the U.S.A. and Israel. It is also one of the bases for the spread of terrorism among the peoples of the Middle East. The Holocaust is sufficient to explain, but does not justify, Israel’s militarism. Even worse is that U.S. behavior in the Middle East is explained mostly by “oil plus militarism.” That murderous way of life profits a tiny percentage of

people, while destroying the lives of the vast majority. Such disgraces will not be abandoned without a substantial political movement which puts its brains and its energies to work to create a government which is truly “by the people and for the people.” Such a movement cannot come into being without substantial work by us, and eat into our “free time.”

I have known and worked politically with many groups in the U.S.A and can say truly and without hesitation that as I look back in my ninety-third year, I do not regret the substantial time spent on politics, but see it as a main contribution to my having had a good life: whether knocking on doors, sitting in meetings, or writing. Indeed I see that time, and those with whom I worked as a main contribution to my having had a “good life.” Even if that were not so, as the world now spins it increasingly becomes obvious that unless sane and decent people take over U.S. politics, our indecent politics will bring an end to life on earth. Then there is also the serious problem of the next threatening realm, to which I now turn.

THE ENVIRONMENT

It is clear that unless substantial changes in how and what we produce and consume are made soon, the world will soon sink into irreversible problems of air and water, soils, etc., and threaten our very existence. Throughout history destruction and waste have existed, but not until the past century did they become lethal. Now they are. Unless and until our destructiveness is reduced and reversed, all living creatures will face disaster. Although air, water, and earth are what we live by, we have increasingly poisoned them with the ways in which we produce and consume. Much that is justifiably worrisome was said of our precarious environment in a penetratingly recent talk delivered in London by John Bellamy Foster, editor of *Monthly Review* (where it is now available in the September 2011 issue.)

It is no secret today that we are facing a planetary environmental emergency, endangering most species on the planet, including our own, and that this impending catastrophe has its roots in the capitalist economic system. . . . Nevertheless, the extreme dangers that capitalism inherently poses to the environment are often inadequately understood and give rise to the belief that it is possible to create a new “natural” or “climate capitalism” in which the system is turned from being the enemy of the environment into its savior. The chief problem with all such views is that they underestimate the cumulative threat to humanity and the earth arising from the existing conditions of production; the full enormity of the planetary ecological crisis can only be understood from a standpoint informed by the Marxian critique of capitalism.

The prodigious waste of oil, timber, and coal was well on its way in the realms of production in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;

then, as the 1920s rolled on, the giant companies of monopoly capitalism took the economic lead. In doing so, they functioned with a combination of consumerism and massive advertising, reduced production costs, restricted outputs, and, endless product variations. As their sales increased so did their prices and profits. In sum, as Veblen put it in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*: “The infiltration of salesmanship into production was the proliferation of economic waste; expenditure that does not serve human life or human well-being.” Indeed, much of the initial demand for purchased goods under monopoly capitalism is due to “invidious pecuniary comparison,” i.e., status distinctions and the associated forms of “conspicuous consumption” and “conspicuous waste.” In doing so they also created the new monster “consumerism.”

Analysis of these dangers had to await their appearance in the twentieth century, first by Veblen, then—in a synthesis of Marx and Veblen—in Baran and Sweezy’s *Monopoly Capital*: “For them the principal problem was the absorption of the enormous economic surplus resulting from the constantly expanding productivity of the system. It could be absorbed in three ways: capitalist consumption, investment, or waste” (Foster 2011). Economic waste takes various forms: notably, military spending and the sales effort (with its advertising, variation of product appearance, planned obsolescence and model changes, etc.) all taking on gigantic dimensions in the twentieth century, led by the dominant function of advertising. Foster goes on to point out that “In 2005, the U.S.A. spent over a *trillion* dollars on marketing: about 9 percent of GDP.”

WHAT WE MUST DO

Whether in the U.S.A. or our counterparts in the rest of the world, “We the People” have allowed ourselves to be exploited by those seeking—and getting—profits and power: and the Devil *is* taking the hindmost. Moreover, what is already dangerously awful is becoming worse. It is up to us to become politically active *now*, before it’s too late. It’s up to us to reverse what’s wrong and get to work to create a decent society.

The U.S.A., once the world’s leading nation, is on its way down, both in strength and prestige. When Obama was first elected, it seemed likely that the U.S.A. might be turning toward making good sense as a nation. It wasn’t and can’t without our political pressure and leadership. As of now—late 2012—there is reason to expect Obama’s first term politics to continue, with only a little that is desirable and necessary. Ongoing politics both here and abroad are all too likely to be stalled more than improved and, ominously, more wars are around the corner.

The financial world now controls most of the producing world and, as in the U.S.A., the political world and the press. The time is overdue for “us the people” to change. Wall Street has put billions of money into politics and has become always more powerful and wealthy. So: *we* must put lots of thought and time into politics, before what we are letting Wall Street and Big Business do takes our “suffering” over the cliff. The U.S.A. is supposed to be our country; for all too long it has increasingly become *theirs*. About year ago, beginning on Wall Street, protests took hold throughout the nation. As I write in late 2012 the protests are beginning to take hold again. Three cheers for that, but we also need *a nationally coordinated movement* for the substantial improvement of all social problems and possibilities at home, and peace abroad. We cannot have a truly democratic society unless and until those political efforts take hold, spread, deepen, and strengthen. To that I now turn.

ORGANIZATION

One essential form of politics for us now is to function as critical elements within the Democratic Party. We must bring substantial pressure upon existing Democrat politicians and, in the next primaries, have some of our people run for the House and the Senate as Democrats. In short, in the election of 2014 we must seek that the Republicans lose on all levels while also putting pressure on the Democrats. In what follows, before putting forth suggestions for what we must do politically, I will turn 1) again to what’s wrong with our economic and other social realms, and then 2) what we must do politically if we are to have a decent and safe society.

THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

To begin with and before discussing economic problems as such, I turn to a revealing example of what’s wrong and what must and can be done regarding the ongoing troubles of homeowners and its connections with the other realms of what’s wrong. It is generally agreed that today there is a global capital superabundance. Why then, with money sloshing around, is the recovery so lackluster? Since 2008’s financial crisis began there has also been a housing crisis. As noted earlier, the financial crisis received immediate and record-braking billions from the White House, but the home borrowers were left to suffer and, for thousands, to lose their homes. Some experts argue that the government stimulus should have gone to the borrowers, not the lenders, but of course the borrowers did not have the money to capture the ear of the government. As will be discussed as we go along, that disgrace is all too common in all the realms of what government has and has not done.

The economic mess which became obvious in 2007 has usually been seen as a financial breakdown; a repeat of the 1929 crash. However, it is probable that both financial collapses were revelations and consequences of a broader and deeper set of socio-economic problems. Since the business world has regained, intensified, and expanded its powers, our social problems have worsened drastically. The housing problem continues and even worsens in the number and problems of its victims but that is allowed and persists because of the structure and functioning of those in power. As has been discussed at length, the troubles of the economy, inequality, big business, taxes, wars, and the environment interact and overlap in ways which might well be seen as social crimes. Moreover, because the created problems are inter-linked, their resolution can be resolved only if dealt with by a program of overlapping socio-economic policies: created and directed by us, "The People." What follows, then, is my tentative suggestion of what we must do to have a decent and safe society.

We can and must work endlessly to create a truly democratic U.S.A. whose government would truly be run "by and for the people." So, we must get to work to birth a truly democratic society, one in which all are seen to have the same needs and, from birth should have the same chances for good education, health, and shelter; the chance, that is, to realize our possibilities. As the rich and powerful go about their dirty work, what should *we* be doing? As suggested earlier, the many problems we face and endure in the realms of the economy, inequality, big business, taxes, wars, and the environment cannot be resolved separately, for they are not independent of each other any more than are our legs, heart, and brain. One example is the link between inequality and big business: the greater the economic power of big business, the greater also its political power and, the ease to do what it wishes with wages and hours and jobs.

We must become seriously political, learn to work together, and have it become normal for us to work politically with one or more existing political groups and/or create others. There is a great deal to work for and work against. We cannot achieve success in any of the relevant realms unless our numbers are significant both in our localities and in national politics. That said, what should be working for and against, and in what ways? In what follows I put forth only some examples; you and your friends and co-workers can easily make a longer and somewhat different list. Here are a few examples, with the understanding that the political work we need to do has a long list which stretches into every corner of our lives.

When World War II ended there were already many huge companies; in recent decades they have become super-giants, in all parts of the economy and more powerful in politics in all too many realms, not least over the many industries and financiers which benefit from wars: metals, air engines, and weaponry. To end the political powers of giant companies, we must substan-

tially reduce their economic powers, not least in finance. To do that, we must increase the spread and strength of *our* political power. That can be done only if and when we work hard to organize ourselves politically, get to work, and never look back, except to remind ourselves what happens if we allow the nation's "democracy" to be one only of the rich, powerful, fools, and rightists. Fortunately, not all of the rich are enemies of the people. A fine exception, as we have noted above, is Warren E. Buffett, one of the very richest. Here is part of another of his published statements:

Between 1951 and 1954, when the capital gains rate was 25 percent and marginal rates on dividends reached 91 percent in extreme cases, I sold securities and did pretty well. In the years from 1956 to 1969, the top marginal rate fell modestly, but was still a lofty 70 percent—and the tax rate on capital gains inched up to 27.5 percent. I was managing funds for investors then. Never did anyone mention taxes as a reason to forgo an investment opportunity that I offered.

Under those burdensome rates, moreover, both employment and the gross domestic product (a measure of the nation's economic output) increased at a rapid clip. The middle class and the rich alike gained ground. So let's forget about the rich and ultrarich going on strike. . . . The Forbes 400, the wealthiest individuals in America, hit a new group record for wealth this year: \$1.7 trillion. That's more than five times the \$300 billion total in 1992. In recent years, my gang has been leaving the middle class in the dust. A huge tail wind from tax cuts has pushed us along. In 1992, the tax paid by the 400 highest incomes in the United States (a different universe from the Forbes list) averaged 26.4 percent of adjusted gross income. In 2009, the most recent year reported, the rate was 19.9 percent. It's nice to have friends in high places. The group's average income in 2009 was \$202 million—which works out to a "wage" of \$97,000 per hour, based on a 40-hour workweek. (I'm assuming they're paid during lunch hours.) Yet more than a quarter of these ultrawealthy paid less than 15 percent of their take in combined federal income and payroll taxes. Half of this crew paid less than 20 percent. And—brace yourself—a few actually paid nothing. . . . I support President Obama's proposal to eliminate the Bush tax cuts for high income taxpayers. . . . Additionally, we need Congress, right now, to enact a minimum tax on high incomes. I would suggest 30 percent of taxable income between \$1 million and \$10 million, and 35 percent on amounts above that. ("A Minimum Tax for the Wealthy," *New York Times*, November 26, 2012)

The beneficiaries of what should be seen as social crimes see it as heaven on earth. However, what they see as "marvy" is not only hellish for the daily lives of most, it is also murderous to the environment. "Why worry," is their position: "That's for the future." So it is, but some of it has already begun its arrival, as year by year the earth heads toward environmental disasters which will shorten and end all life on earth. All animals need unpoisoned air; year

by year given the ways in which we live the earth becomes less likely to provide it.

In sum, from the beginnings of our becoming a nation, the U.S.A. has been ruled over by the rich and powerful. Assisted by discriminators and war lovers, their social determinants make it increasingly impossible for us to realize what modern technology and science have made possible: a safe, sane, comfortable, and enjoyable society which would contain the worst in us and bring out our best. To that I now turn.

WHAT MUST WE DO TO HAVE A TRULY DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY?

Some reading this will be relatively radical, some relatively conservative, and the rest in between. No matter where you fit in those groups, if you wish the nation to avoid disaster and move toward decency, we must work together now politically to make the U.S.A. our society. Easy to say, not so easy to do: that's life. That cannot be done unless and until we work hard, long, and steadily together to unseat the rich and powerful and their supporters. To work against them, we have to *undo* what they have created in what has been discussed above in the economy, inequality, big business, taxes, wars, and the environment. The "six" interact and are interdependent; to rid ourselves of what's harmful in any one of them, all must become substantially undone in ways to serve *all*, instead of a few. For that to become a reality we must create a political movement which works both nationally and locally to undo what has been harmful to so many for so long, and slowly but surely create a society—to coin a phrase—"Of, By, and For the People." Such a society, if and when attained, would make it normal for *all* people to live safely, and eat and sleep well and comfortably, with dignity and pleasure. It is now our obligation to help create and become active parts of a political movement; endlessly determined to spend enough thought and time and co-ordination to insure that our political efforts succeed and survive. If and when we do that, we will have moved substantially toward an egalitarian society; one without giant companies, with an economy serving people's needs and possibilities, with taxes paid by those who can afford it, no wars, and a protected environment.

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Chapter Six

Empire as a Way of Life

Course Description and Critical Readings

John Marciano

The fundamental purpose of this course is to understand the nature and history of the U.S. Empire and the imperialist policies that are its lifeblood. The prevailing “wisdom” is this:

America remains the one indispensable nation, and the world needs a strong America, and it is stronger now than when I came into office. . . . We’re a nation that brings our enemies to justice while adhering to the rule of law, and respecting the rights of all our citizens. We protect our own freedom and prosperity by extending it to others. We stand not for empire, but for self-determination.

—Barack Obama

If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.

—Madeleine Albright

The conventional views are challenged by a critical perspective:

Imperialism . . . a deliberately chosen line of public policy . . . is motivated, not by the interests of the nation as a whole, but by those of certain classes, who impose the policy upon the nation for their own advantages.

—J. A. Hobson

I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor (and could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos . . . without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today, my own government.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Historian William Appleman Williams argues that Empire became “a way of life” in the U.S., a “combination of patterns of thought and action that, as it becomes habitual and institutionalized, defines the thrust and character of a culture and society.”¹ This “way of life” convinced citizens that they have a right or “manifest destiny” to impose their political and economic policies upon others. U.S. policies have been built upon “common certain assumptions about reality” that leaders and citizens hold—about race/ethnicity, nationalism, religion, and justice. These are the ground rules upon which actual policies are formulated and pursued. The history of empire may include the direct and “forcible subjugation of formerly independent peoples by a wholly external power, and their subsequent rule by the imperial metropolis.”² Since the end of World War II, however, empire in the modern age increasingly involves economic imperialism: “the loss of sovereignty—control—over essential issues and decisions by a largely agricultural society to an industrial metropolis.”³

Historian and political activist Michael Parenti defines imperialism as “the process of empire . . . whereby the dominant politico-economic interests of one nation expropriate for their own enrichment the land, labor, raw materials, and markets of another people.”⁴ The history of this imperial domination is essentially the internationalization of class exploitation that is one of misery and strife for the oppressed peoples of the world.⁵

At the heart of the misery and strife of imperial domination is what the late journalist Andrew Kopkind called the “warrior state.” After the Persian Gulf War in 1991, he wrote, “America has been in a state of war—cold, hot, and lukewarm—for as long as most citizens now living can remember”; this state of war has “been used effectively to manufacture support for the nation’s rulers and to eliminate or contain dissent among the ruled.” This “warrior state is so engrained in American institutions . . . in short, so totalitarian—that the government is practically unthinkable without it.”⁶ This warrior system contradicts the rhetoric about American democracy, Western values, and noble efforts around the world.

Noam Chomsky, America’s leading public intellectual, has analyzed the context in which this imperial/warrior system has unfolded:

The central—and not very surprising—conclusion that emerges from the documentary and historical record is that U.S. international and security policy, rooted in the structure of power in the domestic society, has as its primary goal the preservation of what we might call ‘the Fifth Freedom,’ understood crude-

ly but with a fair degree of accuracy as the freedom to rob, to exploit and to dominate, to undertake any course of action to ensure that existing privilege is protected and advanced.⁷

It is this “Fifth Freedom” of exploitation and domination that forms the foundation of empire and imperialism and present U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere around the world.

The writer and activist Arundhati Roy has condemned the violence of warrior state imperialism. In this hemisphere alone, for example, “hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans have been killed, tortured, or have simply disappeared under the despotic regimes and tin-pot dictators, drug runners, and arms dealers that were propped up in their countries” by the CIA, a major architect and executor of such crimes. Throughout the world, since 1945 the U.S. “has been at war with or has attacked, among other countries, Korea, Guatemala, Cuba, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Grenada, Libya, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan.” One must add to this record “covert operations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America” and “the key role” of the U.S. in the Middle East, where “thousands have died fighting Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.”⁸

Laments by Democrats and liberals—that G. W. Bush’s foreign policies departed radically from past American ideals and governments and they would change under the current Obama administration, reveal a profound ignorance and denial of U.S. history. According to scholar-activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, the actual historical record shows that:

“American” supremacy and populist imperialism are inseparable from the content of the U.S. origin story and the definition of patriotism in the United States today. And it began at the beginning, even before the founding of the United States, not as an accident or aberration in the progression of democracy.⁹

For historian Gabriel Kolko,

the fundamental assumption that the United States retains the right and obligation to intervene in the Third World in any way it ultimately deems necessary, including military, remains an article of faith among the people who guide both political parties, and they have yet to confront the basic American failures in the past or the reasons for them.¹⁰

Critiquing and undermining this hegemonic “article of faith” cannot occur, however, unless we have a systemic and accurate understanding of the nature and history of that which we seek to eliminate:

To prepare with clarity today for [a future of justice and peace] is a long overdue and imperative function of American intellectuals [and citizens] com-

mitted to radical humanist change. To transform society they must first understand . . . its structure and purposes, its toughness and weakness, and define appropriate means and tactics of change which seriously take these durable realities into account.¹¹

The course has been organized for those who are actively engaged in reading the texts and articles. All are welcome to sit in and listen to the discussion; however, actual participation will be limited to those who have read the material for the session. A note on the texts: books may be purchased individually or collectively, begged or borrowed from a library or friend; the only obligation is to read the material before our monthly discussions.

READING LIST, BOOKS

William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life*

Michael Parenti, *Against Empire*

Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, The United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*

READING LIST, ARTICLES

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "The Grid of History: Cowboys and Indians," *Monthly Review*, July–August 2003: <http://monthlyreview.org/2003/07/01/the-grid-of-history-cowboys-and-indians>.

John Bellamy Foster and Robert McChesney, "Kipling, the 'White Man's Burden,' and U.S. Imperialism," *Monthly Review*, November 2003: <http://monthlyreview.org/2003/11/01/kipling-the-white-mans-burden-and-u-s-imperialism>.

Alfred W. McCoy, "Beyond Bayonets and Battleships," *Tom Dispatch*, November 8, 2012: <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175614>.

TEN SESSIONS: OUTLINE OF READINGS

Meeting 1: Opening Remarks on the U.S. Empire

The opening meeting lays out the major themes for the course, commencing with a review of the *dominant* perspective on empire and imperialism passed on in schools and colleges, political institutions and the mass media. The dominant perspective includes a commentary on the U.S. as the exceptional nation favored by God, articulated by such figures as the seventeenth century Massachusetts Puritan, John Winthrop; former president Woodrow Wilson; the historian Victor Davis Hanson; Bill Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; and former president George W. Bush. This will be followed by a *critique* of the dominant view presented by the historian William Appleman Williams, including his analysis of empire put forth by founders Thom-

as Jefferson and James Madison. This first session prepares the groundwork for the critiques of U.S. empire and imperialism that will follow in the next nine meetings.

Meetings 2 and 3: Dunbar-Ortiz, Bellamy Foster and McChesney

The second and third sessions address two fundamental critiques of U.S. racism and imperialism—by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and by John Bellamy Foster and Robert McChesney. Dunbar-Ortiz has no patience with those who have ignored the long history of U.S. aggression that began with the founding of the nation. An accurate understanding of our history must confront the origins of white supremacy—the basis for the colonial and U.S. government crusade to destroy First Americans. “White supremacy [was] the working rationalization and ideology of English theft of Native American lands, and especially the justification for slavery.” It is not only the core premise of U.S. foreign policies “from the origins to the present”; it is “inseparable from the content of this origin story and the definition of patriotism today. It began before the official founding of the nation, and was not an accident or aberration in the progression of democracy.” Essentially, “the U.S. was fundamentally imperialist and racist from the beginning, and imperialism was not a divergence from a well-intentioned path.”

For John Bellamy Foster and Robert McChesney, “the rhetoric of empire knows few bounds” and the racist rhetoric of a century ago is being raised again, as U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have led intellectuals and political commentators to argue there is a link “between the ‘new’ imperialism of the 21st century and the imperialism of the 19th and early 20th centuries.” Some have brought up Rudyard Kipling’s “famous poem about . . . ‘the white man’s burden’—a warning about the responsibilities of empire that was [actually] directed . . . at the U.S. with its new-found imperial responsibilities in the Philippines.” Foster and McChesney suggest that Kipling’s views remain just “as relevant today as they were when the poem was written in the aftermath of the Spanish-American war.” When one examines the documentary record, it is clear that in the post–World War II era alone the record of aggression by Democratic presidents (Truman, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Clinton and now Obama) teaches us that “savage wars of peace” (from neo-conservative Max Boot) are a bi-partisan affair.

Meetings 4 and 5: Williams and Bacevich

The “Introduction” to Williams’ *Empire as a Way of Life* is written by Andrew Bacevich, a Vietnam veteran and West Point graduate, who is Professor of International Relations at Boston University and author of a number of fine books on U.S. foreign policy. He underscores that Williams’ influ-

ence has endured for one simple reason: U.S. foreign policy has vindicated Williams' views on the nature of government and empire, even though he was denounced by the Cold War apologists because he ventured outside acceptable bounds in his criticisms of U.S. policy. His crime was to "suggest in the midst of the Cold War that the U.S. entertained imperial aspirations and that U.S. foreign policy . . . had aimed at building and consolidating an American empire." In his estimation, Williams' conclusions have stood the test of time.

Williams' work emphasizes the founding premises of the nation, particularly the views of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who helped set in motion the basic structure of empire that has remained intact for two centuries. The fundamental question Williams raised is whether this nation is even possible without empire. We must understand the nature and importance of empire in the founding, because this "way of life effectively closed off other ways of dealing with the reality that Americans encountered." Once this foundation was laid, the subsequent trajectory of U.S. foreign policy was quite foreseeable, down to contemporary imperial aggression in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, and Yemen.

Meetings 6 and 7: Parenti

These discussions examine the critical insights on empire and imperialism of historian and activist Michael Parenti. *Against Empire* argues that imperialism has been the most powerful force in world history for the past 500 years. The first "victims of Western European imperialism were other Europeans," e.g., the Irish and Eastern Europeans. Over the past 500 years, however, European and U.S. imperialism have primarily exploited the Third World—"a source of raw material and slaves [and] a market for manufactured goods." The ultimate basis of European domination has rested on its "advantage in navigation and armaments. Muskets and cannons, Gatling guns and gunboats, and today missiles, helicopter gunships, and fighter bombers have been the deciding factor when West meets East and North meets South." He points to a truth hidden by our schooling and mass media indoctrination: the Third World is not "underdeveloped' but overexploited. . . . Imperialism has created . . . 'maldevelopment'" because "wealth is transferred from Third World peoples to [U.S.] economic elites . . . by direct plunder . . . the expropriation of natural resources" and other forms of exploitation, and it has always been backed by "unspeakable repression and state terror." Therefore, it is not a "natural" historical phenomenon because it must rely repeatedly "upon armed coercion and repression." Empires "do not emerge . . . 'in a fit of absentmindedness,' as was said of the British Empire. . . . They are built upon the sword, the whip, and the gun." The ultimate goal of U.S. policy is a quest "to make the world safe for the *Fortune* 500 and its global system of

capital accumulation.” Those who move toward some kind of “economic independence or any sort of populist redistributive politics” will face U.S. “intervention or invasion.”

Meetings 8 and 9: Grandin

These meetings examine Greg Grandin’s *Empire’s Workshop: Latin America, The United States, and the New Imperialism*, including a critical review by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. Grandin writes that prior to World War II, the U.S. “had sent gunboats into Latin American ports over six thousand times,” invaded a number of countries [and] “fought protracted guerrilla wars” in others. But “decades of mounting Latin American anti-imperialist resistance, including armed resistance” forced a brief improvement under Franklin D. Roosevelt. Dunbar-Ortiz asserts that the “soft imperialism” under FDR’s “Good Neighbor” policy was an extension of imperialism by other means, as the poor continued to suffer “while the rulers got richer.” In essence, “the present global crisis does not exist because the system is not working; it exists because that’s the way the system works.” Grandin rightly “dates U.S. imperialism in Latin America to the founding of the U.S.,” and these are further elaborated and corroborated by Williams’ list of U.S. military interventions and occupations in *Empire as a Way of Life*. These U.S. attacks reveal that the empire existed prior to the Spanish-American War that many historians mark as the beginning the age of imperialism and the protection of American interests.

As the Cold War began “security forces trained, funded, equipped, and incited by [the U.S.]” unleashed “a reign of bloody terror . . . from which the region has yet to recover.” This imperialist effort was aided by the formation of the CIA in 1947; its first major act in Latin America was the overthrow in 1954 of Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz. This coup, however, was followed by a defeat for U.S. hegemony in 1959 with the Cuban Revolution. The events in these two countries “[polarized] politics throughout the hemisphere and inflamed a generation of activists” who would later challenge U.S. imperialism in Chile, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Grandin’s analysis of Latin America informs us about “post 9-11 U.S. foreign policy [that] would be impossible were it not for U.S. practices in Latin America, particularly the Reagan administration’s practice and lessons learned in Central America.” U.S. terrorism in Latin America, however, reached new and genocidal levels of violence under Reagan. This shift did not begin abruptly with his presidency, however, and Grandin shows Jimmy Carter’s administration as the transition stage to Reagan’s belligerent approach: “[A] number of [Carter’s] actual policies facilitated the re-arming of the Cold War that his successor would execute in full.”

Meeting 10: Concluding Reflections and the Future

The critical conclusions of Grandin, Parenti, and Williams, as well as historian Alfred McCoy's article on the emerging changes in U.S. imperial warfare, form the last meeting of the course. Grandin connects the U.S.-Iraq War with U.S. wars in Central America in the 1980s. The imperialist links between the policies in Central America and Iraq are quite powerful; therefore, he asks us to recall recent history from the 1980s, arguing "all of . . . [G. W.] Bush's abuses of power . . . have their most immediate antecedents in Reagan's Central America policy." "The precarious misery generated by free-market absolutism will predictably lead to challenges to [U.S.] interests and authority—and, just as predictably, they will have to be dealt with, as they were in Latin America, with an increasingly heavy hand. Talk of the 'Salvador option' [i.e., death squad regimes], in other words, is not an indication of the failure of Washington's imperial policy but an admission of its essence."

William Appleman Williams' last chapter concludes that "[a critical approach to history] begins with an honest reading of what we find in the mirror of our history." Empire "is expensive. It costs a very great deal of money. It kills a great number of human beings. . . . It substitutes paranoid togetherness for community." The dilemma we face, therefore, is that the U.S. empire will continue to destroy this and other nations "until we Americans confront the truth of our imperial way of life."

Michael Parenti concludes his book by affirming the *Progressive* magazine's assessment of U.S. foreign policy post-World War II: "The legacy for the U.S. is tragic: a permanently militarized conception of national security; agencies of covert action and undemocratic secrecy, prone to violation of individual rights and police-state tactics incompatible with democracy; a huge inefficient bureaucracy; militarization of foreign policy; redirection of resources away from humanitarian ends." Confronting this truth is the starting point for any accurate understanding of U.S. imperialism.

In order to challenge and eventually abolish the U.S. Empire, we need a long-range view such as that provided by the late English historian Eric Hobsbawm. "Living for over 80 years of the 20th century has been a natural lesson in the mutability of political power, empires and institutions. I have seen the total disappearance of the European empires, not least the greatest of all, the British Empire. . . . I have seen great world powers relegated to minor divisions, the end of a German Empire that expected to last a thousand years, and of a revolutionary power that expected to last forever. I am unlikely to see the end of the 'American century,' but it is a safe bet that some readers of this book will."

SUPPLEMENTAL CRITICAL READINGS

- Eqbal Ahmad, *Confronting Empire: Conversations with David Barsamian*
 Tariq Ali, *Speaking of Empire and Resistance*
 James Aronson, *The Press and the Cold War*
 Andrew Bacevich, *Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*
 ———, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War*
 James Bamford, *The Ultra-Secret NSA from 9/11 to the Eavesdropping of America*
 Richard Barnett, *Intervention and Revolution: The U.S. in the Third World*
 ———, *Roots of War*
 Walden Bello, *Dilemmas of Domination: The Unmaking of the American Empire*
 William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*
 Carl Boggs, *Imperial Delusions: American Militarism and Endless War*
 Francis Boyle, *Destroying World Order: U.S. Imperialism in the Middle East Before and After September 11*
 Jean Bricmont, *Humanitarian Imperialism: Using Human Rights to Sell War*
 James Carroll, *House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power*
 Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*
 ———, *Hopes and Prospects*
 ———, *Power and Terror: Conflict, Hegemony, and the Rule of Force*
 Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn, editors, *The Pentagon Papers: Critical Essays*
 Douglas Dowd, *Against the Conventional Wisdom: A Primer for Current Economic Controversies and Proposals*
 ———, *Inequality and the Global Economic Crisis*
 Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam*
 Tom Engelhardt, *The World According to Tom Dispatch: America in the New Age of Empire*
 D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins: Vol. I: 1917–1950*
 ———, *The Cold War and Its Origins: Vol. II: 1950–1960*
 John Bellamy Foster, *Naked Imperialism: The U.S. Pursuit of Global Dominance*
 H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and Other American Fantasies*
 Lloyd Gardner and Marilyn Young, editors, *The New American Empire: A 21st Century Teaching in U.S. Foreign Policy*
 Philip Golub, *Power, Profit and Prestige: A History of American Imperial Expansion*
 Felix Greene, *The Enemy: What Every American Should Know about Imperialism*
 Nicholas Guyatt, *Another American Century? The United States and the World Since 9/11*
 Jennifer Harbury, *Truth, Torture and the American Way: The History and Consequences of U.S. Involvement in Torture*
 Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, *The Politics of Genocide*
 Michael Hogan, *Cross of Iron: Harry Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945–1954*
 David Horowitz, *Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War*
 ———, *From Yalta to Vietnam: American Foreign Policy in the Cold War*
 Chalmers Johnson, *Dismantling the Empire: America's Last Best Hope*
 ———, *Nemesis: The Last Days of the Republic*
 Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Hegemony in the Middle East*
 V. G. Kiernan, *America the New Imperialism*
 Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*
 Michael Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*
 Gabriel Kolko, *The Age of War: The United States Confronts the World*
 ———, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy 1945–1980*
 ———, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy: Power and Purpose*
 Michael Krenn, *The Color of Empire: Race and American Foreign Relations*
 Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*
 Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*
 Sidney Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire from the Revolution to Vietnam: A History of U.S. Imperialism*

- Harry Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism*
- Michael Mandel, *How America Gets Away with Murder: Illegal Wars, Collateral Damage and Crimes Against Humanity*
- Alfred McCoy, *Torture and Impunity: The U.S. Doctrine of Coercive Interrogation*
- John Nichols, *Against the Beast: A Documentary History of American Opposition to Empire*
- Michael Parenti, *The Face of Imperialism*
- , *The Terrorism Trap: September 11 and Beyond*
- John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time: Resisting the Empire*
- , *The New Rulers of the World*
- Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960*
- John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Actions from World War II through the Persian Gulf*
- Dana Priest and William M. Arkin, *Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State*
- Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy*
- Arundhati Roy, *War Talk*
- Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Price? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*
- Ellen Schrecker, editor, *Cold War Triumphalism: The Misuse of History After the Fall of Communism*
- Richard Seymour, *The Liberal Defence of Murder*
- , *American Insurgents: A Brief History of American Anti-Imperialism*
- Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s*
- Francis Shor, *Dying Empire: U.S. Imperialism and Global Resistance*
- Laurence Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy*
- Norman Solomon, *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death*
- John Tirman, *The Lives of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America's Wars*
- Penny Von Eschen, *Rage Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957*
- Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Decline of American Power*
- Richard Walton, *Cold War and Counter-Revolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy*
- Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*
- William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*
- Marilyn Young, *The Vietnam Wars: 1945–1990*
- Howard Zinn, *Terrorism and War*
- , *Passionate Declarations: Essays on War and Justice*

NOTES

1. William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life* (Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 2007), p. 12.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
4. Michael Parenti, *Against Empire* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995), p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
6. Andrew Kopkind, "The Warrior State: Imposing the New Order at Home," *The Nation*, April 8, 1991, p. 433.
7. Noam Chomsky, *The Culture of Terrorism* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), p. 1.
8. Arundhati Roy, "The Loneliness of Noam Chomsky," in *War Talk* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003), p. 89.
9. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "The Grid of History: Cowboys and Indians," *Monthly Review*, July–August 2003, p. 90.
10. Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy 1945–1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), p. 296.
11. Gabriel Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 138.

Chapter Seven

Surplus Over-Appropriation and the Reproduction Crisis of the Western Roman Empire

Stephen Spartan

The interests of an economy's privileged "one percent" are of particular relevance to an understanding of the neoliberal politics of Western governments today. Often these interests are expressed as rival reproduction imperatives in an economy—structural contradictions between its modes of governance, modes of privilege, and modes of base production. The crises engendered by such rivalries will be illustrated here through an analysis of the reproduction crisis of the ancient Roman Empire. Perry Anderson and Nicos Poulantzas have emphasized key concepts in critical political economy that astutely inform the historical and social analysis: materialist notions of social formation, mode of production, and reproduction. These will be clarified at the outset of this chapter in order to establish the theoretical framework of my critique. Certain of these concepts have been usefully employed in my contributions to Chapter 1 above on the current crises of over-appropriation and non-reproduction in the U.S. and the financial sector's rent-seeking as a mode of privilege.

CRITICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

Social formation is a Marxist concept similar to the functionalist notions of "society" or "socio-cultural system." Perry Anderson defines a social formation in the following way in his own analytical writing:

Throughout this text, the term “social formation” will generally be preferred to that of “society.” In Marxist usage, the purport of the concept of social formation is precisely to underline the plurality and heterogeneity of possible modes of production within any given historical and social totality. Uncritical repetition of the term “society” conversely, all too often conveys the assumption of the inherent unity of economy, polity, or culture within an historical ensemble, when in fact that simple unity and identity does not exist. Social formations, unless specified otherwise, are thus here always concrete combinations of different modes of production, organized under the dominance of one of them. For this distinction, see Nicos Poulantzas, *Pouvoir Politique et Classes Sociales*, Paris 1968, pp. 10–12. Having made this clear, it would be pedantry to avoid the term “society” altogether, and no attempt will be made to do so here. (Anderson 1978, 22)

The notable point of this discussion is its stress on the coexistence of heterogenous modes of production within a formation. This implies that tensions may exist between modes which affect the structure and function of the formation. The specific form of the society is the result of the combined necessities and possibilities of several distinct modes of production, each with unique reproduction imperatives. The mode of production which dominates the forces of production essential to other modes is the “dominant mode of production” (Anderson 1978, 22). The other modes of production must adjust to the necessary logic of the dominant mode; this dominance must be enforced by some special mechanism, for example, the state.

[T]he state has the particular function of constituting the factor of cohesion between the levels of a social formation. . . . [I]t is also the structure in which the contradictions of the various levels of a formation are condensed. (Poulantzas in Anderson 1978, 44–45)

This chapter follows the usage of these terms by Anderson and Poulantzas; the concept “modes of production” will utilize also a set of insights developed specifically for understanding the contradictory reproduction imperatives within a social formation.

A *mode of production* is a structured organization of productive forces that coordinates the conversion of inputs (productive resources) into outputs (products). The productive forces are labor power, the instruments of labor, and the materials worked upon. These latter two constitute means of production (Shaw 1978, 10). Labor without means and (it goes without saying) means without labor are not productive. Thus, means and labor are inseparable complementary components of production that must be brought together in order for production to occur. Consequently, social production requires a structuring of productive activity, a *mode of cooperation*, to mobilize and blend the specific production inputs necessary for specific production. Marx

stressed the necessity of organizing the productive forces in his discussion of cooperation in *Capital, Volume I*, Chapter 13.

All directly social or communal labour on a large scale requires, to a greater or a lesser degree, a directing authority, in order to secure the harmonious cooperation of the activities of individuals, and to perform the general functions that have their origins in the motion of total productive organisms, as distinguished from the motion of its separate organs. (Marx, [1867] 1976, 448)

A mode of production thus involves various *social relations of production*, some of which are essential to the production process and others of which are surplus. This distinction between essential and surplus relations of production will be utilized in various ways throughout the analysis which follows. It can also be considered similar to Shaw's (1978, 28–47) distinction between work relations and ownership relations. The forces of production and the mode of essential cooperation together constitute the *productive base*. That portion of the total product necessary to reproduce the productive base can be labeled the *necessary product*. The social relations of production that generate the necessary product is the *mode of necessary production*, which is also the mode of essential cooperation. The social relations of distribution that direct necessary product back to the simple reproduction of the productive base constitute the *mode of base reproduction*. If the production process of a society generates a total product flow greater than the necessary product, a *surplus product* is available.

The social relations of production that organize society's productive forces to produce a surplus product can be labeled the *mode of surplus production*, i.e., mode of surplus cooperation. The social relations of distribution (or appropriation) that ensure the continued extraction of surplus product from the base can be seen as the *mode of surplus reproduction*. The modes of surplus production and reproduction are *surplus relations* vis à vis the simple reproduction of the productive base. Thus the social relations of production are not merely modes of necessary production and distribution, they are also the modes of surplus production and distribution. Likewise, the social relations of production are not merely modes of essential cooperation, they are also power and privilege relations. The power and privilege relations of a society will dominate the productive forces and essential work relations to ensure that total product be more than the minimum necessary product.

Marx analyzed in depth only the reproduction dynamics of the capitalist mode of production in the abstract, but he also reflected on pre-capitalist social formations. Marx noted that pre-capitalist social formations differ from capitalism primarily in the limited manner that markets and money (generalized commodity exchange) served as mechanisms of productive forces mobilization, ruling class domination, and working class dependence

in pre-capitalist formations. Capitalism is unique in its organization of production and distribution on a large scale by “non-coercive” means of control; that is by general social dependency on markets (commodity exchange) and money (capital) as forms of reproductive resource distribution. Obviously capitalism also utilizes force and coercion, but the point here is the degree of control by generalized commodity dependency and the fetishism it engenders (see Marx [1867] 1976, Chapter 1, Section 4, 163–177).

In those pre-capitalist social formations organized to generate surplus product, dominance and dependency were more obvious and non-fetishized. “[D]irect relations of dominance and servitude” (Marx [1867] 1976, 452) were the mode of productive coordination and surplus appropriation. Thus in surplus producing pre-capitalist formations, the state rather than free markets and money, reproduced the mode of surplus.

Following Marx, Lenin stressed that the state is the coercive instrument of ruling class domination, serving the purpose of defending the existent modes of surplus production and distribution. It is obvious that owner elites and the state have a common interest in the reproduction of the mode of surplus because both are reproduced by surplus product. But this common necessity to command surplus product may under certain circumstances generate tensions between elites and the state. This tension could exist even if it is not consciously recognized by the social actors involved. Both owner elites and states subsist on surplus product, yet they have distinct reproduction priorities. Hence we must distinguish between surplus product to reproduce elites and surplus product to reproduce the state. The *mode of privilege* (ownership relations) must be distinguished from the *mode of governance* (the state).

The mode of privilege can be understood as the relations of surplus production and distribution that reproduce non-productive elites who appropriate part of surplus product by virtue of ownership power, social customs, or other ideological means, but do not contribute directly or indirectly to the essential management of the productive forces. The mode of governance can be defined as the relations of surplus production and distribution that reproduce quasi-productive elites who appropriate part of surplus product, but do contribute indirectly to the essential management of the productive forces. The mode of governance is an administrative structure which supplies vital organizational services, such as defense, and vital physical infrastructure, such as roads, canals, etc. The mode of governance is a more general and abstract concept than state, and is applicable to any social formation, whereas the state is a legal-rational mode of governance developed to administer complex societies. A state is not just a rational administrative structure functional to the productive base; it is also a structure of legitimate force that enforces unequal access to social power and wealth. Thus the modes of privilege and governance might not be empirically distinguishable in every social formation; indeed in many social formations the mode of privilege and

mode of governance are synonymous. They can be defined, however, as distinct reproduction imperatives. The differentiation of mode of privilege and mode of governance is necessary because the reproduction imperatives of elite owners may be distinct from the reproduction imperatives of the state.

Considering the reproduction imperatives faced by the state, even if Lenin is correct that the state reproduces the mode of surplus, it is not always true that the mode of necessary production and distribution must be reproduced in order to reproduce the mode of surplus as we shall see below. Nonetheless, it is generally the case that the state, as a mode of surplus reproduction, must also be a mode of base reproduction; but in order to accomplish these reproduction imperatives, the state must also reproduce itself.

Following this line of argument, complex social formations are not just “concrete combinations of different modes of production organized under the dominance of one of them,” as Anderson (1978, 22) holds, but are also concrete combination of different reproduction imperatives organized under the dominance of one of them. I shall argue that the *state* is a *mode of reproduction* of a social formation that must coordinate the tensions between the different levels of a formation. I also propose re-conceiving the state as a “state formation” analogous to Anderson’s description of social formation, discussed above, replacing terms in the Anderson quotation above as follows: “social formation” with “*state* formation” and “production” with “*reproduction*”—

[T]he term “*state formation*” will generally be preferred to that of “*state*.” In Marxist usage, the purport of the concept of *state formation* is precisely to underline the plurality and heterogeneity of possible modes of *reproduction* within any given historical and *state* totality. Uncritical repetition of the term “state” conversely, all too often conveys the assumption of the inherent unity of *reproduction behavior* within an historical ensemble, when in fact that simple unity and identity does not exist. *State formations*, unless specified otherwise, are thus here always concrete combinations of different modes of *reproduction*, organized under the dominance of one of them. . . . Having made this clear, it would be pedantry to avoid the term “state” altogether, and no attempt will be made to do so here.

We would expect that reproduction of the productive base must be the dominant reproduction imperative of any social formation, for ultimately the mode of privilege and the mode of governance cannot be reproduced unless the productive base, which provides surplus product, is reproduced. Thus, in the abstract, it could be argued that the mode of base reproduction is ultimately dominant, to the extent that it is essential to the reproduction of the two surplus modes and the social formation in general. In the concrete, however, there are significant illustrations of a given productive base failing

to be reproduced, though the modes of privilege and/or governance did reproduce, if in a somewhat altered form. The evolution of English feudal aristocrats into wool export capitalists, coterminously (via Enclosure Measures) with the destruction of English peasant-serf agriculture is only one famous illustration of the reproduction of a mode of privilege without the reproduction of its initial productive base.

Furthermore, there are also illustrations of elites and/or states over-appropriating surplus product, i.e., the mode of surplus reproduction dominates at the expense of the mode of base reproduction. In such circumstances, either the base must be radically altered (i.e., industrial revolution) to expand total product, or the modes of surplus reproduction must reduce their over-appropriation to stable limits. If neither of these adjustments are immediately made, the base will not be reproduced and thus total product will fall, requiring even greater readjustment of product distribution if the formation is to survive. As total product falls relative to base and surplus reproduction requirements, the formation will experience extreme reproduction contradictions. If the state does not impose compensating limits on privileged appropriation of surplus product, either the state must reduce its appropriation proportionately or the productive base (and total product) will progressively wither, eventually carrying with it the social formation in general.

An extreme reproduction contradiction of this kind (i.e., a surplus over-appropriation crisis) is an excellent opportunity to examine the ultimate nature of the state.

EVOLUTION OF THE OVER-APPROPRIATION CRISIS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The Roman Empire achieved a level of political-economic integration that was the culminating feature of ancient civilization. Contradictions inherited from its Republican foundation remained unresolved however. Of particular importance was the western Empire's inability to achieve a monarchical centralization of power free from the dominance of an aristocratic mode of privilege. My account here will draw substantially upon classical studies of the period by Antonio (1979), Boak and Sinnigen (1965), Boren (1977), Diehl (1957), Jones (1966), Rostovtzeff (1957), Runciman (1956), Starr (1973), and Walbank (1969).

During the expansionary period of the Roman Republic, the mode of privilege was not entirely parasitic, but instead could be treated as a mode of productive governance, i.e., as a system of social power that expanded the productive forces of the formation in general. The productive base of the social formation was expanded primarily by successful warfare and a unique ability to assimilate other Latin tribes, Etruscans, Samnites, Magna Graecia,

and others into a unified Italian heartland (see Boren 1977, 31–41; Starr 1973, 21). The successful wars with Carthage, the annexation of the Hellenistic states, and the conquest of Gaul resulted in a further immense expansion of the land and labor resources of the Roman social formation (see Anderson 1978, 60–62; Boak and Sinnigen 1965, Chapters 8 through 10).

The aristocratic mode of privilege and governance of the early Republic was inevitably incapable of administering this vast domain; thus a new mode of governance was essential if this expanded base was to be retained and reproduced.

The Republic had won Rome its empire: it was rendered anachronistic by its own victories. The oligarchy of a single city could not hold the Mediterranean together in a unitary polity—it had been outgrown by the very scale of its success. . . . [T]he self-protective immobilism and haphazard misgovernment of the Roman nobility in the conduct of its rule over the provinces rendered it increasingly unfit to manage a cosmopolitan empire. . . . A stable, universal monarchy emerged from Actium, because it alone could transcend the narrow municipalism of the senatorial oligarchy in Rome. (Anderson 1978, 67–70)

The contradiction between the complexities of administering an expanded productive base on the one hand, and the efficiency limitations of an aristocratic republic on the other, could be resolved in only one of two ways: either a reduction of the expanded base or the development of a new mode of governance, i.e., a bureaucratic state.

The development of the imperial bureaucratic state as the mode of governance was essential to reproduce the expanded production base and the expanded mode of privilege resulting from the conquest and integration of formerly exogenous forces of production. The expansion of the empire brought new potential forces of production within control of the Roman mode of privilege, but it also required the development of a new mode of governance to realize the potentially higher surplus product of these enhanced forces. The imperial bureaucratic mode of governance was the by-product of the uneven and combined development of expanded forces of production and the increased reproduction necessities of an expanded mode of surplus. Thus, from its inception the bureaucratic imperial state was faced with three reproduction imperatives. It had to reproduce an expanded production base; it had to reproduce the expanded (and ever-expanding) mode of privilege; and it had to reproduce the expanded (and ever-expanding) mode of governance, i.e., reproduce itself.

The assassination of Julius Caesar reflected a conflict between the traditional Republican (aristocratic) mode of privilege and an evolving imperial bureaucratic mode of governance. Augustus won the civil wars following the aristocracy's assassination of Julius Caesar, but Augustus did not attempt to uproot the traditional mode of privilege, instead he established a new impe-

rial mode of governance overlaid on the republican aristocratic mode (see Boak and Sinnigen 1965, 146–56). This new state formation was a compromise between an expanded traditional mode of privilege and a new centralized mode of governance which allowed the aristocracy to maintain control over the Senate and thus ensure its legal right to surplus (Rostovtzeff 1957, 46–47; Boren 1977, 155). According to Anderson:

[W]hile the Senate as an institution became a stately shell of its former self, the senatorial order itself—now purged and renovated by the reforms of the Principate—continued to be the ruling class of the Empire, largely dominating the imperial state machine even after equestrian appointments became normal to a wider range of positions within it. . . . The possessing classes continued to be juridically guaranteed in their property by the precepts established in the Republic. (Anderson 1978, 73–74)

During the expansionary phase, pillage from conquest was a direct source of surplus product that financed significant expanded reproduction of both the mode of privilege and mode of governance. For example,

[T]he spoils of war with Macedonia brought such an enormous booty into the Roman treasury that after 167 [BCE], the war tax on property . . . ceased to be levied. The income of the empire enabled the government to relieve Roman citizens of all direct taxation. (Boak and Sinnigen 1965, 134)

Conquest also expanded the productive base of the society by bringing new lands and a new labor force under the dominance of the Roman mode of surplus. The conquest phase of Roman history vastly expanded the quantity of productive forces and consequently total product, but it also allowed and required an expansion of the mode of surplus.

As conquest ceased, direct pillage and incorporation of new lands and new sources of labor also ceases, effectively ending expanded reproduction of the productive base. Max Weber argued that the end of Roman expansion was “the turning point in the development of ancient civilization.” He dated this to “the battle in the Forest of Teutoburg,” which encouraged “the suspension of offensive warfare on the Rhine” (Weber 1950, 346–47). The end of conquest manifested the contradictions of the slave mode of production and exposed the fragile urban-rural balance of Roman commodity production (Anderson 1978, 76–82). The end of conquest also effectively ended the considerable inflow of direct pillage to which Rome had grown accustomed. Henceforth, the expanding modes of privilege and governance both had to be reproduced from the same limited productive base. This was the beginning of a contradiction of reproduction imperatives within the mode of surplus due to (and intensifying) a surplus over-appropriation crisis. The mode of governance was particularly dislocated by the end of expansion because conquest

had always provided a significant source of state revenues; thus, the end of conquest forced the state to finance its expanded reproduction exclusively from indigenous surpluses. This however was a fragile base due to the large and growing mode of privilege the limited productive base was already supporting. The output of a productive base is limited by the growth rates of the quantity and quality of the productive forces and the management efficiency of the modes of cooperation. If the quality of the inputs and management efficiency are relatively constant, then the growth of total product is limited by the changing quantity of productive forces. If the appropriation of surplus product increases faster than total product, eventually either necessary product will fall, leading to non-reproduction of the base, or else some component of the mode of surplus must be reduced.

From the earliest days of Roman expansion, great land-owning elites had control over the Senate and significant influence in the bureaucracy and military.

Two aristocratic orders monopolized the most powerful and lucrative social, economic and political positions. It has been estimated that the senatorial order constituted approximately two-thousandths of one percent of the Roman people. The less powerful equestrian order (Equites) was probably less than a tenth of one percent of the population. . . . [T]he two orders owned much of the Empire's wealth and controlled most of its social and political power. Despite the autocratic position of the emperor, the aristocracy can be considered a ruling class. (Antonio 1979, 899–900).

Though the composition and direct power of this ruling class (or mode of privilege) varied, it never lost effective control over state policies. This mode of privilege was able to utilize its control of the Senate and influence within the civil and military bureaucracies to institute state policies essential to the expanded reproduction of the mode of privilege, but ultimately fatal to the mode of governance. The great estates were significantly exempted from taxation and military conscription, but more importantly, the continuous absorption of small and medium freeholdings by the privileged estates was essentially unchecked. The concentration and centralization of land and labor by the privileged estates removed taxable land from the treasury and quality citizen manpower from the military (Jones 1966, 177). Increasing portions of surplus product flowed to the mode of privilege reducing the surplus base available for expanded state reproduction. Thus the fiscal crisis of the state, which is a widely recognized aspect of imperial decline, was due to the inability of the mode of governance to fully negate the aristocratic mode of privilege upon which Rome was founded. The surplus product of the empire was never fully available to the mode of governance; the decline of the imperial state consequently involved the declining degree of state control

over reproduction resources (financial and labor), not just the absolute decline of those resources.

The imperial mode of governance was progressively starved of reproduction resources because it failed to limit the expanded reproduction of the mode of privilege and it failed to promote expanded reproduction of the productive base. The limited surplus product of the formation was divided between the modes of privilege and governance in a manner that inhibited the expanded reproduction of the mode of governance to respond to increased necessities, notably the increased defense necessities from the third century forward.

The state had tried to control and reduce the mode of privilege beginning with the compromise of Augustus, i.e., the Principate. Diocletian's reforms were primarily to bring the mode of privilege (and therefore the productive base) firmly under the dominance of the imperial state. These reforms did not successfully reduce the highest strata of the mode of privilege, but they did reduce the middle and lower strata. The decurions were heavily taxed and increasingly forced to carry the burdens of local tax collection, city financing, and in general provide social services formerly financed by state expenditures. This intensified imposition on the decurions was an attempt to increase state revenues and simultaneously reduce state expenditures; but these crushing new taxations and obligations were increasingly non-reproducing this quasi-productive stratum. The "flight of the decurions" involved the exodus of lands and labor out of the command of the state: the flight of the decurions also involved continuous reduction of the portion of surplus product available for state appropriation. The decurions were formerly taxable, but the large estates which survived were not taxable. The state did not succeed in leveling the mode of privilege, instead it crushed the productive base and productive social relations essential to state reproduction. The highest strata of the mode of privilege were not reduced; they continuously expanded through the absorption of bankrupt freeholders and decurions (Antonio 1979, 907; Anderson 1978, 92). Thus the tax and manpower base available to state reproduction was increasingly constrained by concentration and centralization of land ownership in the hands of tax-exempt privileged estates.

Bureaucratic inefficiency compounded the process by failing to allocate the system's resources instrumentally and to conserve them (Antonio 1979, 906–11). An overriding patrimonial rationality fostered corruption, self-seeking, unprofessional management, and elite dominance, all of which contributed to the squandering of state resources. The underlying fiscal contradictions of the empire became fully manifest following the third century when military expenses leaped tremendously over the staggering levels they had already attained. As spending requirements increased, the state imposed ever higher levels of taxation on the remaining tax base. Marginally profitable

lands were abandoned as taxation rose; freeholders and lower stratum decurions were driven into utter poverty by taxation and indebtedness (Boak and Sinnigen 1965, 366). A vicious circle of declining tax base requiring higher tax rates forced land abandonment; this reduced the supply of taxable and draft-liable freeholders and contributed to the growth of large privileged estates, resulting in a further lowering of the tax base. As its requirements increased, the state progressively increased the rate of appropriation from the productive base such that the base was progressively non-reproduced. The state was failing to reproduce the productive base of the formation in a manner that could allow the expanded reproduction of the state. This cycle of progressive non-reproduction of the base could not be continued indefinitely; something had to give.

The Diocletian reforms attempted to rectify the crisis by a variety of revenue increasing and cost-cutting measures (Rostovtzeff 1957, 505–27; Boak and Sinnigen 1965, 426–30 and 448–69). These measures totally failed in the western Empire, but were a solid foundation for the revitalization of its eastern portion.

[I]f we consider the Empire as it existed at the time of Augustus, and the gradual shift in emphasis from the west to the east, culminating in the final split after the reign of Theodosius (379–95), it becomes clear that the survival of the eastern Empire really represents the saving of one part at the expense of the other. . . . [The survival of the east] is itself a tribute to the efforts of the third century emperors and to the reorganization of Diocletian and Constantine. (Walbank 1969, 110)

An in-depth exposition of the immense geographic, demographic, cultural, economic, political, and military differences between the East and West is beyond the scope of this chapter. A general summary of the significant differences between the western and eastern Empires can be found in Jones (1966, Chapter 26) and Anderson (1978, 96–102). Suffice it to say that in the West the surplus over-appropriation crisis was resolved by the progressive non-reproduction of the state. The mode of privilege was reproduced, though eventually reformulated as feudalism, at the expense of the imperial mode of governance. This dominance of the reproduction of the mode of privilege supports a Marxist theory of the state/state formation. In the East, the state formation was reconfigured in such a manner as to escape the drain on surplus into privilege reproduction. The surplus product of the East no longer financed the reproduction of the aristocratic mode of privilege, but rather was reorganized to finance the reproduction of the imperial mode of governance. The East emerged as a form of “oriental despotism” in which the reproduction of the mode of governance was the overwhelming imperative. The imperial mode of governance of the eastern Empire was monocratic to a degree never approached in the Roman West (Runciman 1956, 18–19). For example

the bureaucracy of the East was squarely under the imperial office rather than being a battleground of conflicting interest groups.

Rarely has any administration been more strongly centralized or more ably run than that of Byzantium. . . . The staff, from top to bottom of the administrative ladder, was directly dependent on the Emperor. . . . No other administration, it seems, was completely under the control of one master. (Diehl 1957, 66–68)

In the West, the bureaucracy was riddled with elite privilege, self-seeking, and competition between imperial, aristocratic, and military interests; consequently the bureaucracy of the West lacked a unity of purpose. In the East, a new bureaucracy was established with the single purpose of reproducing the state and the productive base, not the aristocracy and other privileged classes (Anderson 1978, 99). This development of the eastern imperial bureaucracy supports Weber's emphasis on the key role that bureaucratic organization can play within a state formation in assuring above all else the dominance of the reproduction of the mode of governance.

POSTSCRIPT, 2013

The twenty-first century is wide open to a variety of political and economic changes, yet the future is not created out of whole cloth. If analogies with regard to crises of over-accumulation and non-reproduction can be validly made between ancient Rome and the U.S. today, analogous conflicts and consequences would seem to follow. In the U.S. this could portend, on the one hand, the eventual success of *oligarchic* neoliberal and neoconservative policy and ideology, with a new type of much reduced and disempowered state apparatus. Chris Hedges has recently written of “a global form of neo-feudalism, a world of corporate masters and serfs.”¹ On the other, it could result in greater concentration and consolidation of an authoritarian, bureaucratic, police-state type of power in a *proto-fascist* or *neo-fascist* manner. This sort of transformation seems to characterize the emergency manager law being applied by Governor Rick Snyder in Michigan today: his appointment of a state overseer with full control over the finances of the city of Detroit and several other localities in financial crises eliminates local democracy for 49 percent of the black population of the state.² In either of these scenarios the labor force and democracy itself would face severe reductions, restrictions, and repression of its conditions of work and life.

Is there any alternative in which the underlying power of labor could successfully challenge both the possibilities of de-centralized, neo-conservative, corporate rule and/or the pseudo-populism of a fascist-like dictatorship? The experience of various forms of political democracy distinguishes our age importantly from that of ancient Rome. Labor's productive capacity and

power are structurally present, and—given rising expectations—can become manifest as a democratic force (even if the present explodes of its own contradictions) both by withholding labor (as in general strikes) and by a labor force offensive to free itself from its restriction to commodified relations. Under current conditions, this is feasible and foreseeable; a democratic movement for socialist/communist self-governance is both a utopian and a real possibility. As Jodi Dean will make clear in Chapter 18, *this* is the objective horizon that circumscribes the material terrain upon which we live and struggle.

NOTES

1. Chris Hedges in Mark Karlin, “Why Chris Hedges Believes That Serious Revolt Is the Only Option People Have Left,” *Alternet.org*, August 27, 2012, reprinted from <http://truthout.org>. See also Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco, *Days of Destruction Days of Revolt* (New York: Nation Books, 2012).

2. See Laura Conaway, “The Risk for Gov. Snyder in Taking Over Detroit,” February 21, 2013, at http://maddowblog.msnbc.com/_news/2013/02/21/17044015-the-risk-for-gov-snyder-in-taking-over-detroit?lite. Although this take over is muddled by fraud and extortion convictions of its former mayor, Detroit’s economic problems are structural. According to a consultant to the Detroit City Council, John Boyle, “Detroit is a microcosm of what’s going on in America, except America can still print money and borrow.” See Monica Davey and Mary Williams Walsh, “Detroit Crisis Born of Missteps, Wishful Thinking and Bad Luck,” *The New York Times*, March 12, 2013, p. A-1.

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Chapter Eight

An Essay on Repressive Education

*Marcuse, Marx, Adorno, and the Future of
Emancipatory Learning*

Arnold L. Farr

The social/political theorist Iris Marion Young begins Chapter 1 of her book *Inclusion and Democracy* with the following proclamation: “Democracy is hard to love.”¹ Young then goes on to elaborate on the difficulty of establishing a real democracy. However, I’m not going to discuss democracy here, but rather, a necessary ingredient for democracy, emancipatory education. For this reason then, let’s rephrase Young’s proclamation so that it says “Education is hard to love.”

This seems like an odd thing to say given that almost everyone in American society appears to value education. More and more of us are going to college, there has been an attempt to Leave No Child Behind (whatever that means), and our age has been called the information age. Still, one can claim that education is hard to love if only because there is a question about what education is, and there is an educational crisis.

My position in this paper is that we are, and have been for some time, experiencing a crisis in education. This crisis in education reflects what Marcuse calls the dialectic of education. He writes:

The dialectic of education in this society involved an increasing dependence on education, unrestricted knowledge in the competitive economic process, and in the steering of the political process; and, at the same time, an increasing need to “contain” knowledge and reason within the conceptual and value universe of the established society and its improvement and growth in order to protect this society against radical change. The result: an emphasis on profes-

sional, vocational training, and a decline of the “humanities,” of transcendent, critical thought.²

This passage indicates that in our society education has come to mean two things. The first I will call repressive education and the second I will call emancipatory education. These two forms of education are indicative of the contradictory structure of our society. That is, our society is structured in such a way that some social groups are oppressed, dominated, and exploited by others. The educational system is structured in such a way that it maintains the oppressive order of things by, first, putting under erasure the ideas that may lead to future liberation, and secondly, by producing the type of citizens who through their work, interactions, beliefs, labor, etc., will reproduce and reinforce oppressive social mechanisms. For repressive education to be successful it must split itself into two distinct functions. Repressive education has one goal, to maintain the present order. However, insofar as our society is divided into a multiplicity of social groups, repressive education must split itself in order to control these various groups. The split in repressive education is best explained by Jonathan Kozol’s critique of inequalities in education. He writes:

It is a matter of national pride that every child’s ship be kept afloat. Otherwise our nation would be subject to the charge that we deny poor children public school. But what is now encompassed by the one word (“school”) are two very different kinds of institutions that, in function, finance and intention, serve entirely different roles. Both are needed for our nation’s governance. But children in one set of schools are educated to be governors; children in the other set of schools are trained for being governed. The former are given the imaginative range to mobilize ideas for economic growth; the latter are provided with the discipline to do the narrow tasks the first group will prescribe.³

This passage by Kozol points to a class divide in our society. This divide has multiple features such as gender and race inequality. Kozol addresses both class and race in his book. Kozol’s book is an investigation of the type of resource distribution received by certain schools and school districts, and how resources are distributed in such a way that certain children are educated for the economic and social domination of other children. I will not grapple with the details of resource distribution here. This paper is focused on a more general, macro-level analysis. That is, I am concerned about the mentality or form of thinking that supports what Kozol calls “savage inequalities.” My claim is that gross economic inequality and other forms of social domination exist in our society because our society is dominated by repressive education while the possibility of emancipatory education is whittled down. This gets us back to Marcuse’s notion of the dialectic of education.

We are in a society that demands more and more education. The question here is: what is the goal of education and by whom has the goal been set? Further, who exactly benefits from the present goals of education? What is the function of education? In the above passage Marcuse claims that in our society we need “unrestricted knowledge in the competitive economic process, and in steering the political process.”⁴ The need for knowledge is shaped by the overall structure of the society which creates educational institutions with the goal of maintaining the present socioeconomic structure.

The task here is to understand the mechanisms at work in our present model of education that aids in maintaining the present socioeconomic structure. For this we return to Marcuse’s notion of the dialectic of education by way of the Marxian dialectic of base/superstructure. This move is somewhat controversial to the extent that at times the base/superstructure dichotomy is presented as a form of determinism as well as reductionism wherein the superstructure (social institutions, values, ideology, etc.) of a society is determined by the economic base of that society. There are places in the texts of Marx that seem to support this view.

The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.⁵

A few lines later he continues:

With the change of the economic foundations the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformations of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.⁶

The idea that the economic structure is the real foundation on which rises the superstructure seems to suggest a one-way dependency wherein the superstructure depends on the base for its existence. However, upon further analysis we see that the base/superstructure relationship is not possible without mutual dependency. This mutual dependency requires a dialectical relationship wherein both are mutually shaped.

It is quite telling that Marx includes legal relations as a part of the superstructure. The superstructure is constituted by a wide range of values and institutions, including the state. However, in his attempt to explain the base/

superstructure relationship, G. A. Cohen uses law as an explanatory device. His makes the point, “if the economic structure is constituted of *property* (or *ownership*) relations, how can it be distinct from the *legal* superstructure which is supposed to explain it?”⁷ He goes on to argue that the base needs a superstructure. This is not necessarily reductionism or determinism; Cohen is aware of the multi-layered and complex nature of the base/superstructure relationship. The belief that the base simply determines the superstructure was a misunderstanding perpetuated by some early Marxists. One of the first Marxists to combat this idea and advocate a more dialectical view was Antonio Gramsci. Regarding Gramsci, Peter D. Thomas writes:

Gramsci thus comprehends “the superstructures” or “ideologies” in a non-reductive sense—that is, he views the superstructures not as mechanically derived from an originary “base,” but as constituting a dialectical unity or “historical bloc” with the dominant relations of production, the means by which they were organized, guaranteed, and made to endure (or, just as importantly, challenged and transformed).⁸

Gramsci himself writes:

Economy and ideology. The assumption (put forward as an essential postulate of historical materialism) that one can present and explain every political and ideological fluctuation as a direct expression of the structure must be combated on the theoretical level as a primitive infantilism, or it should be combated in practice with the authentic testimony of Marx, the author of concrete political and historical works.⁹

To get into these complexities would take us far beyond the scope of this paper. For our purposes we will focus on the superstructure of education as it is influenced by and helps protect the present economic base.

The task for the remainder of this section is two-fold. First, we must transition from this discussion of base/superstructure in general to its role in shaping the educational superstructure. Secondly, I want to revisit Kozol’s notion of schooling in light of the dialectic of education. Both tasks lead us back to Marx. Although Marx never worked out a theory of education, he did leave us the resources for doing so. Even a short simple passage carries a lot of weight. In *The German Ideology* Marx writes:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the ruling class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of dominant material relationships, the dominant material

relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.¹⁰

It is not difficult to translate the claim made by Marx into the contemporary crisis of education. It is also not difficult to connect this claim by Marx to the above passage by Kozol. Kozol's entire research project is an investigation of the material resources possessed by certain school districts as well as particular schools. There is a direct correlation between the resources available to children in a particular school or district and the opportunities for personal success later in life. However, embedded in the claim by Marx is a deeper problem that is implicit in the passage by Kozol. That is, the control of material forces somehow entails the control of intellectual forces. If this is the case, it is not difficult to see how the term "school" can serve two contradictory functions.

It may be no mystery that the ideas of the ruling class are designed to protect and maintain the status of the ruling class as the ruling class. It may not be so easy to see how these ideas take effect in society. It is for this reason that the Frankfurt School turned to Freud and produced a form of psychoanalytic Marxism. Marcuse's discussion of the psychoanalytic notion of "introjection" and his concept of "mimesis" sheds some light of the mechanisms by which the ideas of the ruling class become the ruling ideas. He writes:

But the term "introjection" perhaps no longer describes the way in which the individual by himself reproduces and perpetuates the external controls exercised by his society. Introjection suggests a variety of relatively spontaneous processes by which the Self (Ego) transposes the "outer" into the "inner." Thus introjection implies the existence of an inner dimension distinguished from and even antagonistic to the external exigencies—an individual consciousness and an individual unconscious *apart from* public opinion and behavior. The idea of "inner freedom" here has its reality: it designates the private space in which man may become and remain "himself."

Today this private space has been invaded and whittled down by technological reality. Mass production and mass distribution claim the *entire* individual, and industrial psychology has long since ceased to be confined to the factory. The manifold processes of introjection seem to be ossified in almost mechanical reactions. The result is, not adjustment but *mimesis*: an immediate identification of the individual with *his* society and, through it, with the society as a whole.¹¹

The psychoanalytic notion of "introjection" describes the formation of the superego. The individual introjects, or internalizes, the values and ideas of his or her society. The superego becomes a form of conscience that controls or dictates the behavior of the individual. However, Marcuse finds this idea to be obsolete. That is, it presupposes a form of inner freedom whereby the

individual actively selects and internalizes certain values. According to Marcuse, the control mechanisms are so well-developed now that this so-called inner freedom is put under erasure. In Foucaultian terms, there is no inner self or consciousness prior to the forms of discursive practices whereby the subject is constituted.

Marcuse's critical theory is not as deterministic as Foucault's insofar as he always searched for spaces for resistance. However, it should be clear that the type of critical consciousness that is necessary for emancipatory social change is being whittled down. In short, the Marxist expectation of the development of revolutionary class consciousness among members of the working class appears null. Critical or revolutionary class consciousness requires recognition of the inequalities and contradictions between the classes as well as consciousness of the social contradictions that perpetuate economic, power, and educational inequalities. What has happened instead is that the contradictions have been smoothed over in such a way that the oppressed and repressed masses identify with their oppressors. There are several social devices or mechanisms in place that aid in this whittling down of critical consciousness. My focus in this paper has been on the role of what is called education in maintaining these social contradictions.

We see that in the dialectic of education the dialectical element is diminished. That is, one side of the dialectic has come to dominate the other. Repressive education has come to dominate and to a great degree put under erasure emancipatory education. However, the relationship between the two sides remains dialectical because the domination of emancipatory education is not yet total. For this reason, repressive education must continue to reinvent itself and assert its power. In the next sections of this chapter, I will examine more closely the nature of repressive education and then offer some ways of combatting it.

REPRESSIVE LIBERALISM AND THE DIALECTIC OF EDUCATION

In this section I will offer a brief critique of the liberal political philosophy of John Rawls and argue that political liberalism plays a role in the development of repressive education. I take on Rawls here because he is one of the most revered representatives of liberal political philosophy, and because I believe that his theory opened the door for a form of radical critique that never materialized. Rawls is a good example of how liberalism can be so right, yet so wrong. This tradition is right regarding its concern for democracy, justice, freedom, equality, etc. However, it is very wrong regarding some of its fundamental assumptions about human beings and their social world.

Rawls takes liberalism a bit further along the right path when he claims that the fundamental subject matter of justice is the basic structure of soci-

ety.¹² This is an important move for liberalism because to recognize that the problem of justice lies in the basic structure of society is a significant development beyond atomistic individualism. However, Rawls' project is derailed when he outlines a methodology for arriving at the principles of justice by which a just society must be structured. Briefly put, individuals who are interested in discovering fair principles of justice by which their society should be structured must go under a hypothetical veil of ignorance. The purpose of this exercise is to purge the individual of features of his or her identity that might make impartiality impossible. However, the main problem with this approach is that it ignores the social/intersubjective constitution of consciousness. Consciousness is never and can never be disembodied. That is, thinking cannot be separated from the values and beliefs that we acquire in the process of identity formation.¹³

A second problem with Rawlsian liberalism is that it completely ignores present and persistent systems of injustice. The question for the oppressed is not only one of creating a future just society, but one of rectification. How do we overcome present injustices?

Charles Mills writes:

The contrast can be simply put as follows. For ideal theory, the project is, starting from ground zero, to map an ideally just society. For non-ideal theory, the project is, starting from an already-existent non-ideal unjust society, to prescribe what ideally would be required in the way of rectificatory justice to make it more just. But such a correction requires a factual characterization of past and present injustices, that is, a description. And the point of framing it in terms of a "contract" among the privileged is to register the crucial claim that *these injustices were (and are) embedded in the basic structure of these societies, not anomalies within a structure essentially just.*¹⁴

In my view, the Rawlsian theory of justice is repressive insofar as it requires that we repress our knowledge of the short and long-term effects of injustice. Putting one's identity under erasure by going under the veil of ignorance has the effect of whitewashing the deep knowledge of injustice acquired by being a victim of such. It is an attempt to give the oppressor the same epistemological authority as the oppressed regarding the consequences of unjust social practices.

As Mills points out, ideal theory starts from ground zero and moves forward as if the damage to the self-formative processes of the victims of social injustice can be ignored. Mills' point is that it is not enough to simply lay the requirements for a just society as if we are starting from ground zero. We are already in a society that is governed by principles and institutions of injustice and social contradictions. The Rawlsian model demands that we repress any possible knowledge of the social processes by which these principles of injustice and social contradictions are produced. Non-ideal theory, on

the other hand, starts with a real set of social facts and the factors whereby they were produced. It demands that we look at the real structure of institutions, organizations, value systems, resource distribution, etc., and their effects social groups.

It is interesting that Rawls himself represses his best insight, that is, the problem of justice and fairness is the basic structure of society. After making this claim, Rawls goes on to employ a method that entirely ignores the basic structure of society. Hence, like most philosophers and even everyday people in the liberal tradition, the focus is on ideas and principles detached from actual social institutions and relations. In this way, the model provided by Rawls is consistent with the requirements of repressive education. There are two features that Rawlsian theory and repressive education share in common. First, there is the ground-zero starting point. Secondly, there is the false assumption regarding human subjectivity or consciousness. However, these two problems are tied together by a common thread, the assumption of neutrality.

Regarding the ground-zero starting point, the purpose of the veil of ignorance exercise is to create a neutral position from where the subject can examine the possible forms that a society can take and to discover the principles of justice by which a fair and just society should be governed. Here one has to engage in abstraction by bracketing the social organization of the real society in which one lives. Secondly, one attempts to achieve neutrality by abstracting from one's own identity and one's place in society.

An adequate critique of Rawls would take us far beyond the scope of this chapter. It is important here to return to the implications of liberalism for education. The main problem with liberalism is that its focus on ideal principles and neutrality is one of the mechanisms that, as Marcuse would put it, smooths over social contradictions. It is non-dialectical and therefore unable to see clearly the way in which society continues to produce and reproduce mechanisms of oppression and repression. Kozol's critique of the term "school" is a great example here. The liberal society takes pride in providing all of its children with the opportunity to go to school. But, what are they going to school for? How does school work for members of different social groups? How are the resources for schools distributed? "Who educates the educators?"¹⁵

The construction of a just society demands that we first examine the structures of injustice that already exist in our society. Even if we can arrive at the principles of justice through some hypothetical mental exercise, the employment of these principles require an examination of present unjust social structures and institutions and the way in which they prohibit social justice. At the 2011 meeting of the International Herbert Marcuse Society Charles Mills gave a paper titled "Can Liberalism Be Radical?" His point was that liberalism has had no problem providing us with emancipatory

principles and ideas. The problem has been translating these principles into the process of institution formation as well as self-formative processes. The principles exist in ideal form only. Only non-ideal theory can inform us as to the best way to actualize these principles because non-ideal theory actually examines the way in which injustice works in the context of present social institutions and human relationships. Only non-ideal theory is cognizant of the mechanisms of “wrong life.”

WRONG LIFE CANNOT BE LIVED RIGHTLY: REPRESSIVE EDUCATION AND ONE-DIMENSIONAL SOCIETY

In *Minima Moralia* Adorno makes a statement that strikes one with the force of a burning bush type of revelation: “wrong life cannot be lived rightly.”¹⁶ Here, let me briefly examine Adorno’s statement in light of Marcuse’s critique of one-dimensionality and repressive tolerance in education. It seems clear that our educational institutions are part of a superstructure that is more and more shaped by capitalist imperatives, the demand to focus on the abstract individual and not the community, the demand for personal success, the need to conform to the present performance principle, to fit in, to consume, to produce for the sake of production, to commodify, to pursue obscene wealth while others are in poverty, etc. Imagine the contradictions in a university that seeks a place among the nation’s top twenty research institutions between the financial situation that creates a hiring freeze, no raises for faculty and staff, layoffs, cuts in research budgets, etc., while the basketball coach signs an eight year contract for over 30 million dollars. Where the money comes from is not important. What is important is that it exposes a set of values that ranks education very low. This is not the only problem.

The specific problem on which I want to focus is how that which parades as education in our society may actually be anti-education. What does it mean to educate a population in a society that systematically and systematically encourages the quest for obscene wealth and over-consumption while poverty among members of the working class increases? What is education in a society where we are becoming more insensitive to the suffering of others? Such education is one-dimensional and repressive. Let us turn for a moment to Marcuse’s essay “Repressive Tolerance.” In this essay Marcuse shows how terms, concepts, or ideas that have their origin in the struggle for liberation are eventually co-opted by oppressive forces and used for the purpose of de-railing the project of liberation. He writes:

This essay examines the idea of tolerance in our advanced industrial society. The conclusion reached is that the realization of the objective of tolerance would call for intolerance toward prevailing policies, attitudes, opinions, and the extension of tolerance to policies, attitudes, and opinions which are out-

lawed or suppressed. In other words, today tolerance appears again as what it was in its origins, at the beginning of the modern period—a partisan goal, a subversive liberating notion and practice. Conversely, what is proclaimed and practiced as tolerance today, is in many of its most effective manifestations serving the cause of oppression.¹⁷

In a one-dimensional society even the quest for liberation and inclusion, the goals of multi-dimensionality are somehow reshaped, redefined, redirected, so that they serve the forces of one-dimensional thinking. A recent example is the conservative, repressive movement in academia spearheaded by David Horowitz and others. I will not go into detail here, I will simply refer the reader to Charles Reitz's essay "Herbert Marcuse and the New Culture Wars: Campus Codes, Hate Speech, and the Critique of Pure Tolerance."¹⁸ The point that I want to make here is that in a one-dimensional society, a complete leveling of all domains of thought is required to maintain the present oppressive/repressive order of things. In the case of Horowitz and company, the critical intention behind the first amendment is whittled down to the point where it is no longer recognized as a critical tool for keeping the government in check, rather, it is taken to be a license to speak without the restrictions of rational thought. One simply speaks even if what one says may victimize another person.

The goal of unchecked free speech suggests that the supporters of such are not cognizant of the power relations, social and economic inequalities, and oppressive social relations that perpetually produce more social victims. The advocacy of blind free speech presupposes or assumes a level or neutral playing field where speakers are merely expressing their opinions. The same is true in education. In a one-dimensional society the critical capacity of education is whittled down for the sake of maintaining the smooth, uninterrupted operation of the capitalist system of domination.

The reduction of resources for the arts, the increasing marginalization of the humanities in colleges and universities, the extraordinary focus on business and marketing as well as on the technological sciences etc., all signify the perpetual development of instrumental rationality for an administered society. Even in the humanities there is a tendency toward one-dimensional thinking. In philosophy, for example, one can master the rules of logic or meta-logic as well as the history of philosophy with its analytic, synthetic, and dialectical approaches and never examine the human conditions as it is lived and experienced by flesh and blood human beings in their daily struggle for existence and meaning. In history we are inundated with stories of white male conquest while the stories of their victims are reduced to a few footnotes.

Marcuse's essay "Repressive Tolerance" shows how critical consciousness is repressed by the misuse in one-dimensional society of a concept that

at its origin demanded critical consciousness. Pure tolerance has hindered the development of what Marcuse calls discriminating tolerance. The function of pure tolerance is to repress discriminating tolerance. Even in this essay Marcuse alludes to education. He writes:

Where the mind has been made into a subject-object of policies, intellectual autonomy, the realm of “pure” thought has become a matter of *political education* (or rather: counter education). This means that previously neutral, value-free formal aspects of learning and teaching now become, on their own grounds and in their own right, political: learning to know the facts, the whole truth, and to comprehend it is radical criticism throughout, intellectual subversion. In a world in which the human faculties and needs are arrested or perverted, autonomous thinking leads into a “perverted world”: contradiction and counter-image of the established world of repression. And this contradiction is not simply stipulated, is not simply the product of confused thinking or phantasy, but is the logical development of the given, the existing world. To the degree to which this development is actually impeded by the sheer weight of a repressive society and the necessity of making a living in it, repression invades the academic enterprise itself, even prior to all restrictions on academic freedom. The pre-empting of the mind vitiates impartiality and objectivity: unless the student learns to think in the opposite direction, he will be inclined to place the facts into the predominant framework of values.¹⁹

Marcuse’s point here is that there is no neutrality; there is no longer any pure thought. If there is no pure thought there is no pure tolerance. Marcuse’s point in the above passage is that thought and education always take place within a certain political order with its values, and goals. The choice of academic curriculum does not occur in a vacuum, but rather, is constituted within a particular value system with its socioeconomic hierarchies.

This passage contains the distinction that I have made between repressive and emancipatory education. Education is repressive when it is taken to be pure and detached from political commitments, values, and goals. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge does not exist. Education functions to either maintain the status quo or to challenge it. The façade of neutrality simply maintains the present order of things. In a society replete with inequalities and injustice the so-called position of neutrality says “yes” to the system that perpetuates these problems. However, Marcuse points to the emancipatory function of education when he suggests that “autonomous thinking” is intellectual subversion. The above passage continues as follows:

Scholarship, i.e., the acquisition and communication of knowledge, prohibits the purification and isolation of facts from the context of the whole truth. An essential part of the latter is recognition of the frightening extent to which history was made and recorded by and for the victors, that is, the extent to which history was the development of oppression. And this oppression is in

the facts themselves which it establishes; thus they themselves carry a negative value as part and aspect of their facticity.²⁰

In this passage we have an example of the function of emancipatory education. As we have seen, repressive education is false education to the extent that it is a partial education that takes itself to be whole. It is the acquisition of certain facts taken out of their context of meaning and development. That is, the “facts” taken out of the context of political influence. Real education, scholarship, refuses to isolate a set of facts from the context of their development. When social facts are put back into their context of development we see that the way in which many people are situated in our society is the result of brutal oppression and repression that has now been erased from memory by the language of freedom and equality.

When Marcuse talks about the “victors” in the above passage he no doubt has Walter Benjamin’s “Thesis on the Philosophy of History” in mind.

And all rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them. Hence, empathy with the victor invariably benefits the rulers. Historical materialists know what that means. Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he surveys have an origin which he cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another.²¹

This passage by Benjamin captures the sentiment expressed by Frederick Douglas in his July 5, 1852, speech titled “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro.”

I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common.—The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth of July is *yours*, not *mine*. *You* may rejoice, *I* must mourn.²²

Both of the above passages suggest that there are two distinct histories running parallel to each other. One is the history of the victors of history, the rulers, or the dominant group while the other is the history of the victims of

history, the oppressed. The very formation of society and its institutions conform to the values and wills of the rulers or victors of history. What is called education by the Establishment (what I have called repressive education), is designed to protect the ruling class and its offspring. The passage by Kozol should come to mind here. In Marcuse's language, autonomous thinking contravenes this ongoing triumphal march of the rules of the rulers through the halls of academic institutions.

BILDUNG, INTERTEXTUALITY, AND MULTI-DIMENSIONAL THOUGHT

I will begin this section with a statement that should be obvious to us. "Thought is under attack." We may revise Young's statement again here, "critical thought is hard to love." My title suggests that I have a question about the future of thought. Let me approach my question by citing a statement that Marcuse made about democracy in a 1968 panel discussion titled "Democracy Has/Hasn't a Future . . . A Present." Marcuse, in response to another panelist says, "So I would say democracy certainly has a future. But in my view it certainly does not have a present."²³ Let me put this another way, I would say that critical thought could possibly have a future. But in my view it certainly does not have a present in an increasing number of educational institutions.

Thought requires moving beyond fixed, static concepts and categories. It requires seeing the whole, the constellation. What does this mean in the context of liberation and education? Consider the history of white male conquest that most of us were taught in school. Consider the heroic individual (usually a white male) of the classic American novel. Consider the invisible Africanist presence as the backdrop against which the hero stands.²⁴ Consider all of the stories that we've heard about the civil rights movement, where are the women? Consider the 1963 March on Washington; where is Bayard Rustin?

Most of our knowledge is selective. We are all taught the same stories about the same individuals, often from the same perspective. We miss the constellation, the intersectionality of persons and events. When applied to social reality, such notions as constellation, intertextuality,²⁵ and multi-dimensionality introduce us to the full human story. We are in a position to engage others, learn from others, recognize and be moved by the suffering of others, see the Other in her social context, be aware of who occupies the subject position of the oppressed and who occupies the subject position of the oppressor, as well as recognize the diversity of views and social positions. We see as Benjamin's Angel of History sees. We no longer see history as a neutral chain of events, as progressive, as we are taught to see it by

traditional education. Instead, we see the pile of ruins. A true, critical education, non-one-dimensional thought, not only recognizes the ruins of history and the social mechanisms by which these ruins are perpetually produced, it also prepares itself for a fight against these social mechanisms. Such an education seeks an end to systemic and systematic dehumanization. This type of education is the type of multicultural education that Charles Reitz (following Marcuse) has articulated in his recent writings. It is also a vision that Marcuse articulated in his recently published lectures on education. It is not a form of education geared toward the mere acquisition of skill sets which perpetuate the use of instrumental rationality. Marcusean education is *Bildung* (cultivation). With respect to Marcuse's use of *Bildung*, Doug Kellner writes:

First, an introduction to Marcuse's philosophy of education should be situated in relation to *Bildung*, a concept embodying a notion of cultural development that is set within a rational, creative, and less repressive logos. *Bildung* concerns autonomous learning/self-formation, which incorporates the whole individual for the purpose of fully developing the self and society. This central ideal remains antithetical to any sense of formalism in education and instead embraces education of the body and mind against passive skill acquisition.²⁶

In a lecture given in 1968 at Brooklyn College, Marcuse himself writes:

By its own inner dynamic, education thus *leads beyond the classroom*, beyond the university, *into the political* dimension, and into the *moral*, instinctual dimension. Education of the whole man, changing his nature! And in both these extensions—into the political and the moral—the driving power is the same: the application of knowledge to the improvement of the human condition, and, the liberation of the mind, and of the body, from aggressive and repressive needs.²⁷

We see here the call for a model of education that radically differs from the present model. Given the implications of this new model, there is no wonder that those who benefit from the present order of things have constructed a model for education that has been purged of *Bildung* and the necessary ingredient of *Bildung*, thought. If thought, critical thinking, humanity, is to have a future, then education must be redefined as *Bildung*. *Bildung* is the source of the new sensibility and requires what I have referred to as intertextuality and multi-dimensional thought.

Bildung itself is multidimensional to the extent that it requires the education of the whole person as well as the full development of the individual and his or her society. Here, education is in the service of the individual and the whole society. It does not serve only one sector of society or abstract ideas such as “production,” “the market,” etc. *Bildung* is a form of intertextuality insofar as it does not allow the dominant group's reading of a society's

formative-process to be the only or dominant reading. As Marcuse has reminded us, “And this oppression is in the facts themselves which it establishes; thus they themselves carry a negative value as part and aspect of their facticity.”²⁸ That is, if we take society to be a text (social narrative) that can be read (interpreted) then it is a text that has been constituted by its interaction with a multiplicity of other texts, readings, interpretations, experiences. Hence, we cannot speak of the American experience as if it is one single unified experience. We cannot speak of education or school as if it means the same thing for all members of American society. The text that we call American society carries within itself its own contradictions and negation. This intertextual reading reveals the dialectic of education and makes clear the mechanisms whereby some are trained to govern while others are merely trained to be governed. Marcuse’s demand for education as *Bildung* and what I have called emancipatory education requires the cultivation of a new sensibility that will make what Kozol calls savage inequalities obsolete.

NOTES

1. Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 16.
2. Herbert Marcuse, “Lecture on Education, Brooklyn College, 1968” in *Marcuse’s Challenge to Education*, edited by Douglas Kellner, Tyson Lewis, Clayton Pierce, and K. Daniel Cho (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), p. 34.
3. Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), p. 176.
4. Herbert Marcuse, “Lecture on Education, Brooklyn College, 1968” in *Marcuse’s Challenge to Education*, op. cit., p. 34.
5. Karl Marx, “Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*” in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 425.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 425–426.
7. G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx’s Theory of History: A Defence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 217–218.
8. Peter D. Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony, and Marxism* (Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2010), p. 100.
9. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol III*, edited and translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 173.
10. Karl Marx, “The German Ideology” in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan, op. cit., p. 192.
11. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 10.
12. Rawls actually says: “Our topic, however, is that of social justice. For us the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of society, or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation. By major institutions I understand the political constitution and the principal economic and social arrangements. Thus the legal protection of freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, competitive markets, private property in the means of production, and the monogamous family are examples of major social institutions. Taken together as one scheme, the major institutions define men’s rights and duties and influence their life prospects, what they can expect to be and how well they can hope to do. The basic structure is the primary subject of justice because its effects are so profound and present from the start. The intuitive notion here is that this structure contains various social positions and that men born

into different positions have different expectations of life determined, in part, by the political system as well as by economic and social circumstances. In this way the institutions of society favor certain starting places over others. These are especially deep inequalities." See, John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 6. Rawls is definitely on the right track in recognizing the role that social institutions play in producing and perpetuating inequalities. However, he never really addresses concrete institutions and the concrete mechanisms by which inequalities are produced.

13. For a more detailed critique of Rawls from this angle see Chapter 7 of Arnold L. Farr, *Critical Theory and Democratic Vision: Herbert Marcuse and Recent Liberation Philosophies* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009).

14. Charles Mills, "Reply to Critics" in Carole Pateman and Charles Mills, *Contract and Domination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), pp. 232–233.

15. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, op. cit., p. 40.

16. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 39.

17. Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance" in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* by Herbert Marcuse, Robert Paul Wolff, and Barrington Moore, Jr. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 81.

18. Charles Reitz, "Herbert Marcuse and the New Culture Wars: Campus Codes, Hate Speech, and the Critique of Pure Tolerance" in *Marcuse's Challenge to Education*, edited by Douglas Kellner, Tyson Lewis, Clayton Pierce, and K. Daniel Cho (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), pp. 213–227.

19. Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance" in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, by Herbert Marcuse, Robert Paul Wolff, and Barrington Moore, Jr. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), pp. 112–113.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

21. Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt and translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 256.

22. Frederick Douglas, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" cited in Charles Mills' *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 169.

23. Herbert Marcuse, et al., "Democracy Has/Hasn't a Future . . . A Present" in *Herbert Marcuse: The New Left and the 1960s*, edited by Douglas Kellner (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 88.

24. See Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993). Morrison uses the term "Africanism" to point to a necessary but invisible presence in many classic American novels whereby white, heroic identity is defined in contrast to that which is African. What emerges is a white, national identity that then puts under erasure (in the text) the brutal process whereby it was formed. Morrison writes: "What Africanism became for, and how it functioned in, the literary imagination is of paramount interest because it may be possible to discover, through a close look at literary 'blackness,' the nature—even the cause—of literary 'whiteness.' What is it *for*? What parts do the invention and development of whiteness play in the construction of what is loosely described as 'American?'" (p. 9).

25. The term "intertextuality" is associated with authors such as Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes and to some degree Derrida. It functions to deconstruct our belief that any given text has a singular meaning that allows us to read the text as if there can be closure. The point is that every text is the product of a system of texts and context. Every text is a sign that has its meaning in relation to other signs. Julia Kristeva explains it as follows: "The term *intertextuality* denotes this transition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources,' we prefer the term *transposition* because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic—of enunciative and denotative positionality. If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated. In this way polysemy can also be seen as the result of a semiotic polyva-

lence—an adherence to different sign-systems.” See Julia Kristeva, “Revolution in Poetic Language” in *The Kristeva Reader*, edited by Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 111.

26. Douglas Kellner, Tyson Lewis, and Clayton Pierce, “Introduction” in *Marcuse’s Challenge to Education*, op. cit., p. 7.

27. Herbert Marcuse, “Lecture on Education, Brooklyn College, 1968,” in *Marcuse’s Challenge to Education*, *ibid.*, p. 35.

28. Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance,” op. cit., p. 113.

Chapter Nine

Can Democratic Education Survive in a Neoliberal Society?

Henry A. Giroux

Public education is under assault by a host of religious, economic, ideological, and political fundamentalists. The most serious attack is being waged by advocates of neoliberalism, whose reform efforts focus narrowly on high-stakes testing, traditional texts and memorization drills. At the heart of this approach is an aggressive attempt to disinvest in public schools, replace them with charter schools, and remove state and federal governments completely from public education in order to allow education to be organized and administered by market-driven forces.¹ Schools would “become simply another corporate asset bundled in credit default swaps,” valuable for their rate of exchange and trade value on the open market.² It would be an understatement to suggest that there is something very wrong with American public education. For a start, this counterrevolution is giving rise to punitive evaluation schemes, harsh disciplinary measures, and the ongoing deskilling of many teachers that together are reducing many excellent educators to the debased status of technicians and security personnel. Additionally, as more and more wealth is distributed to the richest Americans and corporations, states are drained of resources and are shifting the burden of such deficits on to public schools and other vital public services. With 40 percent of wealth going to the top 1 percent, public services are drying up from lack of revenue and more and more young people find themselves locked out of the dream of getting a decent education or a job while being robbed of any hope for the future.

As the nation’s schools and infrastructure suffer from a lack of resources, right-wing politicians are enacting policies that lower the taxes of the rich and mega corporations. For the elite, taxes constitute a form of class warfare

waged by the state against the rich, who view the collection of taxes as a form of state coercion. What is ironic in this argument is the startling fact that not only are the rich not taxed fairly, but they also receive over \$92 billion in corporate subsidies. But there is more at stake here than untaxed wealth and revenue, there is also the fact that wealth corrupts and buys power. And this poisonous mix of wealth, politics and power translates into an array of anti-democratic practices that creates an unhealthy society in every major index, ranging from infant mortality rates, to a dysfunctional political system.³

What is hidden in this empty outrage by the wealthy is that the real enemy here is any form of government that believes it needs to raise revenue in order to build infrastructures, provide basic services for those who need them, and develop investments such as a transportation system and schools that are not tied to the logic of the market. One consequence of this vile form of class warfare is a battle over crucial resources, a battle that has dire political and educational consequences especially for the poor and middle classes, if not democracy itself.

Money no longer simply controls elections; it also controls policies that shape public education. One indicator of such corruption is that hedge fund managers now sit on school boards across the country doing everything in their power to eliminate public schools and punish unionized teachers who do not support charter schools. In New Jersey, hundreds of teachers have been sacked because of alleged budget deficits. Not only is Governor Christie using the deficit argument to fire teachers, he also uses it to break unions and balance the budget on the backs of students and teachers. How else to explain Christie's refusal to oppose reinstating the "millionaires taxes," or his craven support for lowering taxes for the top 25 hedge fund officers, who in 2009 raked in \$25 billion, enough to fund 658,000 entry-level teachers.⁴

In this conservative right-wing reform culture, the role of public education, if we are to believe the Heritage Foundation and the likes of Bill Gates-type billionaires, is to produce students who laud conformity, believe job training is more important than education, and view public values as irrelevant. Students in this view are no longer educated for democratic citizenship. On the contrary, they are now being trained to fulfill the need for human capital.⁵ What is lost in this approach to schooling is what Noam Chomsky calls "creating creative and independent thought and inquiry, challenging perceived beliefs, exploring new horizons and forgetting external constraints."⁶ At the same time, public schools are under assault not because they are failing (though some are) but because they are one of the few public spheres left where people can learn the knowledge and skills necessary to allow them to think critically and hold power and authority accountable. Not only are the lines between the corporate world and public education blurring, but public schooling is being reduced to what Peter Seybold calls a "corporate service station," in which the democratic ideals at the heart of public

education are now up for sale.⁷ At the heart of this crisis of education are larger questions about the formative culture necessary for a democracy to survive, the nature of civic education and teaching in dark times, the role of educators as civic intellectuals and what it means to understand the purpose and meaning of education as a site of individual and collective empowerment.

This current right-wing emphasis on low-level skills removes the American public from examining the broader economic, political, and cultural forces that bear down on the school. Matters concerning the influence on schools of corporations, text book publishers, commercial industries and the national security state are rendered invisible, as if schools and the practices they promote exist in a bubble. At work here is a pedagogy that displaces, infantilizes and depoliticizes both students and large segments of the American public. Under the current regime of neoliberalism, schools have been transformed into a private right rather than a public good. Students are now being educated to become consumers rather than thoughtful, critical citizens. Increasingly as public schools are put in the hands of for-profit corporations, hedge fund elites, and other market driven sources, their value is derived for their ability to turn a profit and produce compliant students eager to join the workforce.⁸

What is truly shocking about the current dismantling and disinvestment in public schooling is that those who advocate such changes are called the new educational reformers. They are not reformers at all. In fact, they are reactionaries and financial mercenaries who are turning teaching into the practice of conformity and creating curricula driven by an anti-intellectual obsession with student test scores, while simultaneously turning students into compliant subjects, increasingly unable to think critically about themselves and their relationship to the larger world. This poisonous virus of repression, conformity and instrumentalism is turning public education into a repressive site of containment, a site devoid of poetry, critical learning and soaring acts of curiosity and imagination. As Diane Ravitch has pointed out, what is driving the current school reform movement is a profoundly anti-intellectual project that promotes “more testing, more privately managed schools, more deregulation, more firing of teachers [and] more school closings.”⁹ There are no powerful and profound intellectual dramas in this view of schooling, just the muted rush to make schools another source of profit for finance capital with its growing legion of bankers, billionaires and hedge fund scoundrels.

Public schooling is increasingly harnessed to the needs of corporations and the warfare state. One consequence is that many public schools, especially those occupied by poor minority youth, have become the new factories for dumbing down the curricula and turning teachers into what amounts to machine parts. At the same time, such schools have become increasingly militarized and provide a direct route for many youth into the prison-industrial

complex or what is called the school-to-prison pipeline.¹⁰ What is buried under the educational rhetoric of hedge-fund and casino capitalism reform is the ideal of offering public school students a civic education that provides the capacities, knowledge and skills that enable students to speak, write and act from a position of agency and empowerment.

Privatization, commodification, militarization and deregulation are the new guiding categories through which schools, teachers, pedagogy and students are defined. The current assault on public education is not new but it is more vile and more powerful than in the past. Crucial to any viable reform movement is the need to understand the historical context in which public education has been transformed into an adjunct of corporate power as well as the ways in which the current right-wing reform operates within a broader play of power, ideology and other social forces that bear down in anti-democratic ways on the purpose of schooling and the practice of teaching itself. Making power visible is important, but only a first step in understanding how it works and how it might be challenged. But recognizing such a challenge is not the same thing as overcoming it. Part of this task necessitates that educators anchor their own work in classrooms, however diverse, in projects that engage the promise of an unrealized democracy against its existing, often repressive forms. And this is only a first step.

Schools should be viewed as crucial to any viable notion of democracy, while the pedagogical practices they employ should be consistent with the ideal of the good society. This means teaching more than the knowledge of traditional canons. In fact, teachers and students need to recognize that as moral and political practice, pedagogy is about the struggle over identity just as much as it is a struggle over what counts as knowledge. At a time when censorship is running amok in public schools, the debate over whether we should view schools as political institutions seems not only moot, but irrelevant. Pedagogy is a mode of critical intervention, one that believes teachers have a responsibility to prepare students not merely for jobs, but for being in the world in ways that allow them to influence the larger political, ideological and economic forces that bear down on their lives. Schooling is an eminently political and moral practice, because it is both directive and actively legitimates what counts as knowledge, sanctions particular values and constructs particular forms of agency.

One of the most notable features of contemporary conservative reform efforts is the way in which they increasingly position teachers as a liability and in doing so align them with modes of education that are as demeaning as they are deskilling. These reforms are not innocent and actually promote failure in the classroom. And when successful, they open the door for more public schools to be closed, provide another chance at busting the union and allow such schools to be taken over by private and corporate interests. Under the influence of market-based pedagogies, teachers are the new welfare

queens, and are repeatedly subjected to what can only be described as repressive disciplinary measures in the school and an increasing chorus of verbal humiliation from politicians outside of the classroom. Teachers are not only on the defensive in the neoliberal war on schools, they are also increasingly pressured to assume a more instrumental and mercenary role. Such approaches leave them with no time to be creative, use their imagination, work with other teachers or develop classroom practices that are not wedded to teaching for the test and other demeaning empirical measures. Of course, the practice of disinvesting in public schools has a long history, but it has strengthened since the election of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s and has intensified in the new millennium. How else to explain that many states invest more in building prisons than educating students, especially those who are poor, disabled and immersed in poverty. The right-wing makeover of public education has resulted in some states, such as Texas, banning critical thinking in their classrooms while in Arizona legislation has been passed that eliminates all curricula material from the classroom that includes the histories of Mexican-Americans.

Fighting for democracy as an educational project means encouraging a culture of questioning in classrooms, one that explores both the strengths and weaknesses of the current era. I think Zygmunt Bauman is right in arguing that “if there is no room for the idea of a wrong society, there is hardly much chance for the idea of a good society to be born, let alone make waves.”¹¹ At stake here is the question of what kind of future do our teachings presuppose? What forms of literacy and agency do we make available to our students through our pedagogical practices? I believe that this broader project of addressing democratization as a pedagogical practice should be central to any worthwhile attempt to engage in classroom teaching. And this is a political project. As educators, we have to begin with a vision of schooling as a democratic public sphere, and then we have to figure out what the ideological, political and social impediments are to such goals and organize collectively to derail them. In other words, educators need to start with a project, not a method. They need to view themselves through the lens of civic responsibility and address what it means to educate students in the best of those traditions and knowledge forms we have inherited from the past, and also in terms of what it means to prepare them to be in the world as critically engaged agents.

Educators need to be more forceful, if not committed, to linking their overall investment in democracy to modes of critique and collective action that address the presupposition that democratic societies are never too just or just enough. Moreover, such a commitment suggests that a viable democratic society must constantly nurture the possibilities for self-critique, collective agency and forms of citizenship in which teachers and students play a fundamental role. Rather than be forced to participate in a pedagogy designed to up

test scores and undermine forms of critical thinking, students must be involved pedagogically in critically discussing, administrating and shaping the material relations of power and ideological forces that form their everyday lives. Central to such an educational project is the ongoing struggle by teachers to connect their pedagogical practices to the building of an inclusive and just democracy, which should be open to many forms, offer no political guarantees and provide an important normative dimension to politics as an ongoing process that never ends. Such a project is based on the realization that a democracy open to exchange, question and self-criticism never reaches the limits of justice; it is never just enough and never finished. It is precisely the open-ended and normative nature of such a project that provides a common ground for educators to share their resources with a diverse range of intellectual pursuits, while refusing to believe that such struggles in schools ever come to an end.

In order to connect teaching with the larger world so as to make pedagogy meaningful, critical and transformative, educators will have to focus their work on important social issues that connect what is learned in the classroom to the larger society and the lives of their students. Such issues might include the ongoing destruction of the ecological biosphere, the current war against youth, the hegemony of neoliberal globalization, the widespread attack by corporate culture on public schools, the dangerous growth of the prison-industrial complex, the ongoing attack on the welfare system, the increasing rates of incarceration of people of color, the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the rise of a generation of students who are laboring under the burden of debt and the increasing spread of war globally.

But educators need to do more than create the conditions for critical learning for their students; they also need to responsibly assume the role of civic educators willing to share their ideas with other educators and the wider public by writing for a variety of public audiences in a number of new media sites. This suggests using opportunities offered by a host of public means of expression including the lecture circuit, radio, Internet, interview, alternative magazines and the church pulpit, to name only a few. Such writing needs to become public by crossing over into spheres and avenues of expression that speak to more general audiences in a language that is clear but not theoretically simplistic. Capitalizing on their role as intellectuals, educators can address the challenge of combining scholarship and commitment through the use of a vocabulary that is neither dull nor obtuse, while seeking to speak to a broad audience. More importantly, as teachers organize to assert the importance of their role and that of public schooling in a democracy, they can forge new alliances and connections to develop social movements that include and also expand beyond working with unions.

Educators also need to be more specific about what it would mean to be both self-critical as well as attentive to learning how to work collectively

with other educators through a vast array of networks across a number of public spheres. This might mean sharing resources with educators in a variety of fields and sites, extending from other teachers to community workers and artists outside of the school. This also suggests that educators become more active in addressing the ethical and political challenges of globalization. Public schools teachers need to unite across the various states and make a case for public education. At the very least, they could make clear to a befuddled American public that the deficit theory regarding school cutbacks is a fraud. There is plenty of money to provide quality education to every student in the United States. As Salvatore Babones points out, "The problem isn't a lack of money. The problem is where the money is going."¹² The issue is not about the absence of funds as much as it is about where funds are being invested and how more revenue can be raised to support public education in the United States. The United States spends around \$960 billion on its wars and defense-related projects.¹³ In fact, the cost of war over a ten-year period "will run at least \$3.7 trillion and could reach as high as \$4.4 trillion," according to the research project "Costs of War" by Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies.¹⁴ As Babones argues, the crucial recognition here is that research consistently shows that education spending creates more jobs per dollar than any other kind of government spending. A University of Massachusetts study ranked military spending worst of five major fiscal levers for job creation. The UMass study ranked education spending the best. A dollar spent on education creates more than twice as many jobs than a dollar spent on defense. Education spending also outperforms health care, clean energy and tax cuts as a mechanism for job creation.¹⁵

Surely, this budget could be trimmed appropriately to divert much-needed funds to education, given that a nation's highest priority should be investing in its children rather than in the production of organized violence. As capital, finance, trade and culture become extraterritorial and increasingly removed from traditional political constraints, it becomes all the more pressing to put global networks and political organizations into play to contend with the reach and power of neoliberal globalization. Engaging in intellectual practices that offer the possibility of alliances and new forms of solidarity among public school teachers and cultural workers such as artists, writers, journalists, academics and others who engage in forms of public pedagogy grounded in a democratic project represents a small, but important, step in addressing the massive and unprecedented reach of global capitalism.

Educators also need to register and make visible their own subjective involvement in what they teach, how they shape classroom social relations and how they defend their positions within institutions that often legitimate educational processes based on narrow ideological interests and political exclusions. This suggests making one's authority and classroom work the

subject of critical analysis with students, but taken up in terms that move beyond the rhetoric of method, psychology or private interests. Pedagogy in this instance can be addressed as a moral and political discourse in which students are able to connect learning to social change, scholarship to commitment, and classroom knowledge to public life. Such a pedagogical task suggests that educators define intellectual practice “as part of an intricate web of morality, rigor and responsibility”¹⁶ that enables them to speak with conviction, enter the public sphere in order to address important social problems and demonstrate alternative models for what it means to bridge the gap between public education and the broader society. Of course, there are many academics, teachers and right-wing pundits who argue that the classroom should be free of politics and hence a space where matters of power, values and social justice should not be addressed. The usual object of scorn in this case is the charge that teachers who believe in civic education indoctrinate students. In this ideologically pure world, authority in the classroom is reduced to a transparent pedagogy in which nothing controversial can be stated and teachers are forbidden to utter one word related to any of the major problems facing the larger society. Of course, this position is as much a flight from responsibility as it is an instance of a dreadful pedagogy.

One useful approach to embracing the classroom as a political site, but at the same time eschewing any form of indoctrination, is for educators to think through the distinction between a politicizing pedagogy, which insists wrongly that students think as we do, and a political pedagogy, which teaches students by example and through dialogue about the importance of power, social responsibility and the importance of taking a stand (without standing still) while rigorously engaging the full range of ideas about an issue.

Political pedagogy offers the promise of nurturing students to think critically about their understanding of classroom knowledge and its relationship to the issue of social responsibility. Yet it would also invoke the challenge of educating students not only to engage the world critically, but also to be responsible enough to fight for those political and economic conditions that make democratic participation in both schools and the larger society viable. Such a pedagogy affirms the experience of the social and the obligations it evokes regarding questions of responsibility and transformation. In part, it does this by opening up for students important questions about power, knowledge, and what it might mean for them to critically engage the conditions under which life is presented to them. In addition, the pedagogy of freedom would provide students with the knowledge and skills to analyze and work to overcome those social relations of oppression that make living unbearable for those who are poor, hungry, unemployed, deprived of adequate social services and viewed under the aegis of neoliberalism as largely disposable. What is important about this type of critical pedagogy is the issue of responsibility as both a normative issue and a strategic act. Responsibility

not only highlights the performative nature of pedagogy by raising questions about the relationship that teachers have to students, but also the relationship that students have to themselves and others.

Central here is the importance for educators to encourage students to reflect on what it would mean for them to connect knowledge and criticism to becoming an agent, buttressed by a profound desire to overcome injustice and a spirited commitment to social agency. Political education teaches students to take risks, challenge those with power and encourage them to be reflexive about how power is used in the classroom. Political education proposes that the role of the teacher as public intellectual is not to consolidate authority but to question and interrogate it, and that teachers and students should temper any reference for authority with a sense of critical awareness and an acute willingness to hold it accountable for its consequences. Moreover, political education foregrounds education not within the imperatives of specialization and professionalization, but within a project designed to expand the possibilities of democracy by linking education to modes of political agency that promote critical citizenship and address the ethical imperative to alleviate human suffering.

On the other hand, politicizing education silences in the name of orthodoxy and imposes itself on students while undermining dialogue, deliberation, and critical engagement. Politicizing education is often grounded in a combination of self-righteousness and ideological purity that silences students as it enacts “correct” positions. Authority in this perspective rarely opens itself to self-criticism or for that matter to any criticism, especially from students. Politicizing education cannot decipher the distinction between critical teaching and pedagogical terrorism because its advocates have no sense of the difference between encouraging human agency and social responsibility and molding students according to the imperatives of an unquestioned ideological position and sutured pedagogical script. Politicizing education is more religious than secular and more about training than educating; it harbors a great dislike for complicating issues, promoting critical dialogue and generating a culture of questioning.

If teachers are truly concerned about how education operates as a crucial site of power in the modern world, they will have to take more seriously how pedagogy functions on local and global levels to secure and challenge the ways in which power is deployed, affirmed and resisted within and outside traditional discourses and cultural spheres. In this instance, pedagogy becomes an important theoretical tool for understanding the institutional conditions that place constraints on the production of knowledge, learning and academic labor itself. Pedagogy also provides a discourse for engaging and challenging the production of social hierarchies, identities, and ideologies as they traverse local and national borders. In addition, pedagogy as a form of production and critique offers a discourse of possibility, a way of providing

students with the opportunity to link meaning to commitment and understanding to social transformation—and to do so in the interest of the greatest possible justice. Unlike traditional vanguardists or elitist notions of the intellectual, critical pedagogy and education should embrace the notion of rooting the vocation of intellectuals in pedagogical and political work tempered by humility, a moral focus on suffering and the need to produce alternative visions and policies that go beyond a language of sheer critique. I now want to shift my frame a bit in order to focus on the implications of the concerns I have addressed thus far and how they might be connected to developing an academic agenda for teachers as public intellectuals, particularly at a time when neoliberal agendas increasingly guide social policy.

Once again, in opposition to the privatization, commodification, commercialization and militarization of everything public, educators need to define public education as a resource vital to the democratic and civic life of the nation. At the heart of such a task is the challenge for teachers, academics, cultural workers and labor organizers to join together in opposition to the transformation of public education into commercial spheres, to resist what Bill Readings has called a consumer-oriented corporation more concerned about accounting than accountability.¹⁷ As Bauman reminds us, schools are one of the few public spaces left where students can learn the “skills for citizen participation and effective political action. And where there is no [such] institution, there is no ‘citizenship’ either.”¹⁸ Public education may be one of the few sites available in which students can learn about the limits of commercial values, address what it means to learn the skills of social citizenship, and learn how to deepen and expand the possibilities of collective agency and democratic life.

Defending education at all levels of learning as a vital public sphere and public good, rather than merely a private good, is necessary to develop and nourish the proper balance between democratic public spheres and commercial power, between identities founded on democratic principles and identities steeped in forms of competitive, self-interested individualism that celebrate selfishness, profit making and greed. This view suggests that public education be defended through intellectual work that self-consciously recalls the tension between the democratic imperatives and possibilities of public institutions and their everyday realization within a society dominated by market principles. If public education is to remain a site of critical thinking, collective work and thoughtful dialogue, educators need to expand and resolutely defend how they view the meaning and purpose of their work with young people. As I have stressed repeatedly, academics, teachers, students, parents, community activists and other socially concerned groups must provide the first line of defense in protecting public education as a resource vital to the moral life of the nation, and open to people and communities whose resources, knowledge and skills have often been viewed as marginal. This

demands not only a new revolutionary educational idea and concrete analysis of the neoliberal and other reactionary forces at work in dismantling public education, but also the desire to build a powerful social movement as a precondition to real change and free quality education for everyone.

Such a project suggests that educators develop a more inclusive vocabulary for aligning politics and the task of leadership. In part, this means providing students with the language, knowledge and social relations to engage in the “art of translating individual problems into public issues, and common interests into individual rights and duties.”¹⁹ Leadership demands a politics and pedagogy that refuses to separate individual problems and experience from public issues and social considerations. Within such a perspective, leadership displaces cynicism with hope, challenges the neoliberal notion that there are no alternatives with visions of a better society and develops a pedagogy of commitment that puts into place modes of critical literacy in which competency and interpretation provide the basis for actually intervening in the world. Leadership invokes the demand to make the pedagogical more political by linking critical thought to collective action, human agency to social responsibility and knowledge and power to a profound impatience with a status quo founded upon deep inequalities and injustices.

One of the crucial challenges faced by educators is rejecting the neoliberal collapse of the public into the private, the rendering of all social problems as biographical in nature. The neoliberal obsession with the private not only furthers a market-based politics, which reduces all relationships to the exchange of money and the accumulation of capital, it also depoliticizes politics itself and reduces public activity to the realm of utterly privatized practices and utopias, underscored by the reduction of citizenship to the act of buying and purchasing goods. Within this discourse all forms of solidarity, social agency and collective resistance disappear into the murky waters of a politics in which the demands of privatized pleasures and ready-made individual choices are organized on the basis of marketplace interests, values and desires that cancel out all modes of social responsibility, commitment and action. This is a reactionary public pedagogy that finds hope in the creation of atomized individuals who live in a moral coma and regresses to sheer Darwinism or infantilism. One of the major challenges now facing educators, especially in light of the current neoliberal attack on public workers, is to reclaim the language of the social, agency, solidarity, democracy and public life as the basis for rethinking how to name, theorize and strategize a new kind of education, as well as more emancipatory notions of individual and social agency, and collective struggle.

This challenge suggests, in part, positing new forms of social citizenship and civic education that have a purchase on people’s everyday lives and struggles. Teachers bear an enormous responsibility in opposing neoliberalism—the most dangerous ideology of our time—by bringing democratic po-

litical culture back to life. Part of this effort demands creating new locations of struggle, vocabularies and values that allow people in a wide variety of public spheres to become more than they are now, to question what it is they have become within existing institutional and social formations, and “to give some thought to their experiences so that they can transform their relations of subordination and oppression.”²⁰ One element of this struggle could take the form of resisting attacks on existing public spheres, such as schools, while creating new spaces in clubs, neighborhoods, bookstores, trade unions, alternative media sites and other places where dialogue and critical exchanges become possible. At the same time, challenging neoliberalism means fighting against the ongoing reconfiguration of the state into the role of an enlarged police precinct designed to repress dissent, regulate immigrant populations, incarcerate youth who are considered disposable and safeguard the interests of global investors. It also means shifting spending priorities in favor of young people and a sustainable democracy.

Revenue for investing in young people, social services, health care, crucial infrastructures and the welfare state has not disappeared; it has simply been moved into other spending categories or used to benefit a small percentage of the population. For instance, military spending is far too bloated and supports a society organized for the mass production of violence. Such spending needs to be cut to the bone without endangering the larger society. In addition, as John Cavanaugh has suggested, educators and others need to fight for policies that provide a small tax on stocks and derivatives, eliminate the use of overseas tax havens by the rich and create tax policies in which the wealthy are taxed fairly.²¹ Cavanaugh estimates that the enactment of these three policies could produce as much as \$330 billion in revenue annually, enough to vastly improve the quality of education for all children through the United States.²²

As governments globally give up their roles of providing social safety nets, social provisions, and regulation of corporate greed, capital escapes beyond the reach of democratic control, leaving marginalized individuals and groups at the mercy of their own meager resources to survive. Under such circumstances, it becomes difficult to create alternative public spheres that enable people to become effective agents of change. Under neoliberalism’s reign of terror, public issues collapse into privatized discourses and a culture of personal confessions, greed and celebrities emerges to set the stage for depoliticizing public life and turning citizenship and governance into a form of consumerism. It gets worse. The rich and the powerful dislike public education as much as they despise any real notion of democracy and they will do all in their power to defend their narrow ideological and economic interests.

The growing attack on public education in American society may say less about the reputed apathy of the populace than about the bankruptcy of old

political languages and orthodoxies and the need for new vocabularies and visions for clarifying our intellectual, ethical and political projects, especially as they work to re-absorb questions of agency, ethics and meaning back into politics and public life. In the absence of such a language and the social formations and public spheres that make democracy and justice operative, politics becomes narcissistic and caters to the mood of widespread pessimism and the cathartic allure of the spectacle. In addition, public service and government intervention is sneered upon as either bureaucratic or a constraint upon individual freedom. Any attempt to give new life to a substantive democratic politics must address the issue of how people learn to be political agents as well as what kind of educational work is necessary within what kind of public spaces to enable people to use their full intellectual resources to provide a profound critique of existing institutions and to undertake a struggle to make the operation of freedom and autonomy achievable for as many people as possible in a wide variety of spheres. As engaged educators, we are required to understand more fully why the tools we used in the past feel awkward in the present, often failing to respond to problems now facing the United States and other parts of the globe. More specifically, educators face the challenge posed by the failure of existing critical discourses to bridge the gap between how society represents itself and how and why individuals fail to understand and critically engage such representations in order to intervene in the oppressive social relationships they often legitimate.

Against neoliberalism, educators, students and other concerned citizens face the task of providing a language of resistance and possibility, a language that embraces a militant utopianism while constantly being attentive to those forces that seek to turn such hope into a new slogan or punish and dismiss those who dare to look beyond the horizon of the given. Hope is the affective and intellectual precondition for individual and social struggle, the mark of courage on the part of intellectuals in and out of the academy who use the resources of theory to address pressing social problems. But hope is also a referent for civic courage, which translates as a political practice and begins when one's life can no longer be taken for granted, making concrete the possibility for transforming politics into an ethical space and a public act that confronts the flow of everyday experience and the weight of social suffering with the force of individual and collective resistance and the unending project of democratic social transformation.

There is a lot of talk among educators and the general public about the death of democratic schooling and the institutional support it provides for critical dialogue, nurturing the imagination, and creating a space of inclusiveness and critical teaching. Given that educators and others now live in a democracy emptied of any principled meaning, the ability of human beings to imagine a more equitable and just world becomes more difficult. I would hope educators, of all groups, would be the most vocal and militant in chal-

lenging this assumption by making clear that at the heart of any notion of a substantive democracy is the assumption that learning should be used to expand the public good, create a culture of questioning and promote democratic social change. Individual and social agency becomes meaningful as part of the willingness to think in oppositional, if not utopian, terms “in order to help us find our way to a more human future.”²³ Under such circumstances, knowledge can be used for amplifying human freedom and promoting social justice, and not for simply creating profits. The diverse terrains of critical education and critical pedagogy offer some insights for addressing these issues, and we would do well to learn as much as possible from them in order to expand the meaning of the political and revitalize the pedagogical possibilities of cultural politics and democratic struggles. The late Pierre Bourdieu has argued that intellectuals need to create new ways for doing politics by investing in political struggles through a permanent critique of the abuses of authority and power, especially under the reign of neoliberalism. Bourdieu wanted educators to use their skills and knowledge to break out of the microcosm of academia and the classroom, combine scholarship with commitment and “enter into sustained and vigorous exchange with the outside world (especially with unions, grassroots organizations and issue-oriented activist groups) instead of being content with waging the ‘political’ battles, at once intimate and ultimately, and always a bit unreal, of the scholastic universe.”²⁴

At a time when our civil liberties are being destroyed and public institutions and goods all over the globe are under assault by the forces of a rapacious global capitalism, there is a concrete urgency on the horizon that demands not only the most engaged forms of political opposition on the part of teachers, but new modes of resistance and collective struggle buttressed by rigorous intellectual work, social responsibility, and political courage. The time has come for educators to distinguish caution from cowardice and recognize the need for addressing the dire crisis public education is now facing. As Jacques Derrida reminds us, democracy “demands the most concrete urgency . . . because as a concept it makes visible the promise of democracy, that which is to come.”²⁵ We have seen glimpses of such a promise among those brave students and workers who have demonstrated in Montreal, Paris, Athens, Toronto and many other cities across the globe.

As engaged intellectuals, teachers can learn from such struggles by turning the colleges and public schools into vibrant critical sites of learning and unconditional spheres of pedagogical and political resistance. The power of the existing dominant order does not merely reside in the economic or in material relations of power, but also in the realm of ideas and culture. This is why educators must take sides, speak out and engage in the hard pedagogical work of debunking corporate culture’s assault on teaching and learning, orient their teaching for social change, connect learning to public life. At the

very least, educators can connect knowledge to the operations of power in their classroom, provide a safe space for students to address a variety of important issues ranging from the violation of human rights, to crimes against humanity. Assuming the role of public intellectual suggests being a provocateur in the classroom; it means asking hard questions, listening carefully to what students have to say and pushing teaching against the grain. But it also means stepping out of the classroom and working with others to create public spaces where it becomes possible not only to “shift the way people think about the moment, but potentially to energize them to do something differently in that moment,” to link one’s critical imagination with the possibility of activism in the public sphere.²⁶ This is, of course, a small step, but if we do not want to repeat the present as the future or, even worse, become complicit in the workings of dominant power, it is time for educators to collectively mobilize their energies by breaking down the illusion of unanimity that dominant power propagates while working diligently, tirelessly and collectively to reclaim the promises of a truly global, democratic future.

NOTES

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16. Arundhati Roy, *Power Politics* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2001), p. 6.
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Chapter Ten

Defeating Corporate Blueprints, White Papers, and Blue Ribbon Task Forces

*Academic Labor Reclaims Public Higher Education
for the Public*

Patricia Pollock Brodsky

From 2000 through autumn 2005, faculty at the University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC), a medium-sized public urban institution, faced a series of relentless attacks on academic freedom, faculty governance, and the public status of the university. In response to this multi-pronged attempt to corporatize and privatize UMKC, faculty, students, and the community together mounted a successful defense of public higher education.

The author was a member of the UMKC faculty and an officer of its AAUP advocacy chapter that led the fight.¹ Herbert Marcuse writes that “students and teachers [must] take control of the means of intellectual production: the university.”² At UMKC faculty and students reclaimed control of the “means of production” and in the process overcame a longstanding campus culture of complacency and apathy. They put into practice principles of education expounded in *Charter 2000: A Comprehensive Political Platform*—the author was one of the platform’s drafters³—education as a universal human right serving the public good and laying the foundation of an informed democracy. This account is not intended as a model for action, since every situation is unique. It presents, rather, an example of what can be achieved when people work together aggressively to protect and advance public education.

Threats to UMKC initially came from a group of local big businesses trying to gain access to public funds, particularly from research in the lucrative fields of health sciences and biotechnology. Corporatization of the uni-

versity was approached in two distinct phases: first as an attempt at an internal administrative coup, and second, when that was foiled by faculty activism, as an attempt to take over the governance of the university from outside. Both targeted the faculty as a professional workforce and as the source of potential resistance, to be coopted or overcome.

In 2000 a new chancellor, Martha Gilliland, emerged as the public face for the corporate takeover.⁴ Her strategies included a direct attack on the faculty, as well as various schemes for advancing pet departments and projects and passing on favors to her backers in the business community. She began by designating certain disciplines as privileged, particularly the health sciences. She attempted to win over the campus with a deceptive plan she called a “Blueprint for the Future.” From its inception the Blueprint began to replace elected faculty governing bodies with non-elected committees that included a significant proportion of administrators. The chancellor was quick to reward loyalty and to punish dissent, firing seven deans who didn’t “get with the program.” Her attitude toward academic freedom can be illustrated by her best-known publication, an essay on academic leadership written before she came to UMKC, in which she called critics “terrorists” who “need to be removed” (Gilliland and Tynan 1997).

Among strategies to undermine academic freedom were “Transformation Workshops” for faculty and staff that made extensive use of “facilitators” and peer pressure. Questioning and critical thinking were attacked—as were the critics themselves at times. This process, termed brainwashing in a newspaper exposé, was the direct outgrowth of a 1970’s self-improvement program known as EST, Erhard Seminar Training (Blackwood 2001). Far from being a harmless fad, EST had many of the characteristics of a cult, utilizing group intimidation techniques including verbal abuse and manipulative jargon. One faculty participant in a “Workshop” remarked, “Forty-four years ago I escaped [from] Franco’s Spain. . . . Little did I imagine I would experience a case of ‘désjà vu’ at a U.S. university” (Martinez-Carrion 2001).

Gilliland’s methods emphasized coercion and surveillance. One of her Blueprint committees issued an “Employee Participation” survey, which tabulated participation in Blueprint projects for every faculty and staff member at UMKC, along with faculty tenure status. The document also provided totals for each department and unit, with the percentage of persons in those units who participated in any way. It didn’t take much imagination to see the potential impact of *non*-participation on future tenure cases and on departmental requests for support.

Meanwhile the chancellor also attempted to outsource UMKC piecemeal to local business interests. Deals were floated to sell off part of the highly rated dental school to a private company, and to transfer teacher training and degree granting from the School of Education to a private “Institute for Urban Education.” This was followed by a plan to move the Law School off-

campus to an abandoned federal courthouse, where the university would have signed an 80-year lease with a local developer.

The biggest prize coveted by Gilliland and her backers, however, was the biotech industry. UMKC, with its medical, dental, pharmacy and nursing schools and its large-grant-funded research-oriented School of Biological Science (SBS), seemed to offer a ready-made institutional framework. The chancellor first tried to bribe SBS with funds from the Stowers Institute, a well-endowed private research facility in the process of launching a for-profit company to commercialize “scientific discoveries made by the institute and future partners” (*Kansas City Star* 2002). SBS refused to cooperate and retribution was swift. The provost, acting on orders from the chancellor, froze all the School’s funds and offered the faculty a choice: be privatized or be dissolved.⁵ The AAUP chapter began a letter writing campaign involving the faculty and the community, and distributed a position paper pointing out the administration’s violations of academic freedom and shared governance. In addition, SBS faculty took a vote of no confidence in the chancellor. A November 2002 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, “Chancellor Says Transformation, Biologists Say Mumbo-Jumbo” (Fogg 2002), was the first to give a national hearing to the faculty at UMKC.

Angry at being rebuffed by SBS, the potential centerpiece of her scheme, the chancellor shifted her emphasis to restructuring, reducing or closing down other departments and programs. One means to that end was to force selected academic units to submit to “viability audits.” A Blueprint committee was given the mandate of recommending continuance, merger or elimination of each unit. Two deans and the chair of sociology resigned in protest, while other faculty demanded an audit of the top-heavy administration instead, and the AAUP recommended “collective methods of non-cooperation” (P. Brodsky 2003).

A further, perhaps desperate, attempt to intimidate faculty was a new computer log-on policy that suddenly appeared on computer screens all over campus in the fall of 2004. It stated in part, “Any or all uses of this system and all files on this system may be intercepted, monitored, recorded, copied, audited, inspected and reported to authorized site, government, or law enforcement personnel, as well as authorized officials of government agencies, both domestic and foreign.” Alert faculty recognized the grave threat to free speech, and by immediately enlisting the aid of the University of Missouri System president, university counsel, and the national AAUP, forced the chancellor to back down and rescind the policy. In retrospect the faculty’s rapid response and the public support of the president in rejecting the invasive policy marked the beginning of the end for the chancellor.

What turned out to be the chancellor’s final, and most drastic, ploy started with a series of attempts to defund the College of Arts and Sciences and the renegade SBS, to the benefit of the health sciences. During the summer of

2004 the administration issued a document outlining a major campus reorganization. The organizational, governance, and financial ramifications of the new structure would have been dire. The faculty unanimously demanded a written list of justifications for the plan. The administration's response, the "White Paper on Reorganization," made even more bizarre and destructive proposals: to merge the schools of business, law, education, and computer sciences/engineering into a single monstrosity, which could then be downsized at will, or to remove "profitable" departments or parts of departments from the College of Arts and Sciences for inclusion in more privileged units. The remainder, those disciplines rich in critical thinking, culture, and public service, and therefore poor in profit-making potential, would be reduced to a "service mission" centered "around humanities and social sciences."

The "White Paper" was the last straw. Five Schools plus the Part Time Faculty Association and the AAUP brought votes of no confidence. At this point Elson Floyd, the University System's first African American president, came to campus and met with all constituencies. The overwhelming consensus was that the Gilliland administration had to go, and on December 3, 2004, Chancellor Gilliland tendered her resignation. In his "State of the University" address in January, President Floyd repudiated once and for all the White Paper and the Blueprint Committees. And he promised to work closely with elected faculty and student bodies, calling for a new campus culture of communication and trust.

Thus ended the Gilliland phase of the corporate assault on UMKC. Faculty had persisted even when chances of success seemed remote and were rewarded with an unexpected victory. The campus celebrated "regime change," but kept one eye on the enemy.

To defeat the Chancellor's agenda, the faculty used a variety of strategies to realize the principles of informed resistance and outreach to all potential allies. The newly founded AAUP chapter newsletter, *The Faculty Advocate*, became the voice of ethical practice, exposing administrative deceptions and educating its readers, a minority of whom were AAUP members, about AAUP principles. The newsletter solicited articles from a broad cross-section of the campus community and urged its readers to submit op-eds and letters to editors of mainstream publications. It also published or republished all these letters and op-eds, whether or not printed in mainstream organs, and without mainstream editorial tampering. Faculty participated in radio talk shows and TV interviews, learned to write effective press releases, and cultivated good relations with education reporters. The AAUP chapter expanded its membership base, helped adjunct faculty and graduate assistants form their own organizations, and supported student groups. AAUP members won election to important committees and took back the Faculty Senate from administration collaborators. The chapter also did regional outreach, extending support to faculty at other institutions in Missouri and Kansas. UMKC

faculty were fortunate that President Floyd had a history of cooperating with the AAUP at his previous institution. The AAUP executive committee invited him to campus to discuss faculty issues, and he also attended a chapter meeting—both unprecedented and productive events.

To reach a broad audience the AAUP chapter organized meetings and conferences, such as the symposium, “Putting the Faculty Back into Shared Governance,” which helped educate the faculty about their rights. In 2001 the AAUP organized a regional conference, “Education for Democracy: Fighting the Corporate Takeover,” which featured twenty-six speakers—faculty, students, and community activists—representing a broad range of voices. Issues addressed included monopoly campus franchises, corporatized distance education, and corporate control of research, curriculum, and methods of instruction. Out of this conference grew the Education for Democracy (E4D) Network, an online activist list of national and international members. In 2004 the AAUP cosponsored a conference with the Missouri Philological Association, “The State of Academic Labor: Defunding/Defending Education in Missouri.” It was the first such joint undertaking of an AAUP chapter with a disciplinary organization in AAUP history. Sixteen sessions focused on topics in language and literature while eight dealt with labor issues, such as working-class culture and labor in the curriculum. The two keynote speakers, professor Cary Nelson and poet Martin Espada, addressed social issues in complementary ways, while plenaries focused on the attack on public education and the humanities. Both conferences helped AAUP publicize the struggle at UMKC.

Immediately after Gilliland’s resignation, “phase II” began with a vicious corporate media campaign against UMKC. The new agenda aimed not just at control of the institution but at removing the campus from the University of Missouri system in order to reprivatize it.⁶ This agenda exemplified “corporate welfare” in its most naked form. In May 2005 a powerful group of Kansas City businesses commissioned a “Blue Ribbon Task Force” “to conduct a . . . study of UMKC as an urban university.” The Task Force would report directly to the Missouri State Government Review Commission appointed by far-right Governor Matt Blunt. The Commission was window-dressing to legitimize the Governor’s assault on public education and the public domain. The chair of the Commission was a prominent businessman and a staunch defender of Martha Gilliland. The chair of the Task Force was Benno Schmidt, who under Governor Pataki of New York had outsourced and privatized large parts of the CUNY system. Schmidt was also chairman of the board of Edison Schools Inc., a corporation that privatizes public schools for profit, with catastrophic results nationwide. Two other Task Force members were James J. Duderstadt and Farris Womack, who decried shared governance as “cumbersome and awkward at best and ineffective and indecisive at worst . . . shared anarchy . . . inhibit[ing] change” (Duderstadt

and Womack 2003). The entire process was designed to exclude the university community.

The Task Force's initial proposals called for dissolution of the University of Missouri System and the establishment of local boards controlled by businesses, particularly to profit by lucrative graduate and research programs. The publicly stated ambition of the Task Force was to empower their backers to make urban policy, with the university as their major economic engine. Supporters of the Task Force were straightforward about their vision of the university, including the related issue of attracting private donors. For example, at a preliminary hearing of the Government Review Commission in May, Woody Cozad, a Kansas City businessman and member of the UMKC Trustees, stated that control of the university belonged to the holder of the purse strings. He opined that a donation of \$3 million could "buy you a couple of board seats. . . . Those who give money should have some say in the way things are run" (D. Brodsky 2005). Neither patronage, nor corruption (board seats for sale), nor the shakedown of public institutions starved for funds seemed to register on his ethical screen.

Unfortunately for the business cabal, they were opposed by a stubborn and principled university community. The speed of the corporate attack—a familiar blitzkrieg strategy—required a rapid mobilization of oppositional forces. The AAUP chapter leafleted the Task Force meeting on campus, and members in the audience challenged its claim of neutrality. The chapter also enlisted the aid of sympathetic state legislators, and a member of the Government Review Commission even published an AAUP op-ed in his newspaper. The AAUP urged the university and neighborhood communities to attend or testify at the June 24th hearing of the Government Review Commission, which was scheduled to be held in Kansas City. The AAUP also sent a press release to the Missouri Press Association which reached over three hundred newspapers. Campus and system-wide student organizations issued statements in support of the preservation of the state university system. By June 24th public interest was at a high pitch and a showdown was in the making.

The overconfident Government Review Commission made a fatal tactical error by scheduling the hearing close to campus. Because UMKC is an urban university, many students and faculty were in town during the summer, and there were no empty seats in the large auditorium. Testifying in favor of the Task Force proposals were Benno Schmidt and a member of the Civic Council of Greater Kansas City, representing the region's largest companies. The thirteen pro-university witnesses included faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, a former chair of the Curators (trustees of the University of Missouri System), the member of the Missouri House representing UMKC's district, and the president of the Kansas City branch of the NAACP. The author testified for the AAUP, condemning the attempts of the business community to seize control of the university. The final witness ended his

statement with an appeal to the Government Review Commission: “your reaffirmation that higher education is a public good deserving of respect and public support will do more to improve our Great State of Missouri than any other act of public service you can perform” (D. Brodsky 2005).

The AAUP mobilization bore fruit. Despite being packed with the governor’s corporate backers, the Missouri State Government Review Commission voted 13–4 to reject the proposal to destroy the University of Missouri system. The plans in the Task Force’s final report to make Kansas City the capital of life sciences research bypassed uncooperative UMKC. Needless to say, without massive external financing, which was not part of the plan, the city will not be a leader in the life science industry any time soon. As the report and the Task Force faded away, business and government assaults continued but failed to gain traction. After five years of AAUP organizing, educating, mobilizing, and refusing to capitulate, the faculty, the university, and the citizens survived and prevailed.

This historical survey of the “blue and white wars” has been written in the hope that the successes at UMKC can serve as an example of, if not an inspiration for, what can be accomplished through principled action and solidarity. To fight back, the academic workforce need not be unionized, or even have an AAUP chapter, though some organizational focus is necessary. Conditions since 2005 have worsened significantly in our society in general, and attacks continue on public higher education and on UMKC, but campus resistance and mobilization showed that victories are possible. Now more than ever the people must hold their ground and fight for a progressive vision of education.

NOTES

1. The AAUP distinguishes an advocacy chapter from a collective bargaining chapter. Collective bargaining for public employees is not recognized in Missouri law.

2. Marcuse in Kellner, Douglas, Tyson Lewis, Clayton Pierce, and K. Daniel Cho, eds., *Marcuse’s Challenge to Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), p. 35.

3. For the complete text of *Charter 2000* see <http://progressiveplatform2000.org/Charter-2000-Platform.htm>.

4. The four-campus University of Missouri system is headed by a President whose office is in Columbia. The head administrator of each campus is known as the chancellor.

5. SBS was also deprived of self-government and put under the oversight of an urban geographer with the nickname “Perky Pig,” for his ability to garner enormous benefits wherever he was employed.

6. The private University of Kansas City (UKC) was sold to the state of Missouri in 1963 because it was heavily in debt. Over the next four decades the state not only assumed all UKCs debts but developed and expanded the institution, renamed University of Missouri–Kansas City, far beyond its original size. The campaign by local big businesses to reprivatize UMKC would have promised a nice windfall: the private expropriation of public property developed through public investment of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.

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Chapter Eleven

Art as a Manifestation of the Struggle for Human Liberation

A Non-Dogmatic Marxist Position in Aesthetics

Zvi Tauber

In his critique of Marxist art theories, which tend to rely merely on the scheme of historical materialism, Herbert Marcuse, *inter alia*, asked the question concerning the relation between art as an element of the ideological superstructure and its material foundation. Marx himself had raised the same question in the introduction to the draft—*Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Grundrisse [1857/8] 1973)*—and tried to provide an adequate answer for it. In light of his attempt to account for the ostensible incongruence between cultural elements from the domain of ideology—such as the ancient Greek epic poetry—and the material foundation, I’ll try in this article to present a Marcusean answer to the question concerning art and “its” material basis, thereby also examining the applicability of the scheme of historical materialism to art.

“Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life” (Marx and Engels [1845] 1976, 37). This early assertion made by Marx was reformulated and elaborated in the preface to his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), generating a scheme in the philosophy of history known as “historical materialism,” whereby “the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being [*Sein*, existence], but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness” (Marx [1859] 1958, 363).

According to this scheme, crucial historical developments should be construed as determined and motivated primarily by factors of the economic

foundation, constituents of the “mode of production”—namely, the specific-historical evolutionary level of the “forces of production” (the relationship between human beings and nature, man-nature relationship, primarily the level of technological advancement) and the specific-historical features of the resulting “relations of production” (man-man relationship, the class stratification in society, the social division of labor occurring within the system of material production and sustaining it). Against the particular, historical background of the economic foundation (social existence) and as a consequence thereof, certain “ideological forms” emerge—political order and judicial principles, religious beliefs and rituals, philosophical methods and works of art—whereby human beings become conscious of their socio-political existence. I shall not discuss here comprehensively the tough, general questions concerning the affinity between the ideological forms and the material foundation, supposed to condition them, but rather try to explore a single aspect of the matter, following the difficulty raised by Marx regarding art.

In the above mentioned introductory draft, written a year or two before publishing the mature version of the historical materialism scheme, Marx himself pointed out some of the problems involved in implementation of his historico-philosophical approach as a methodical means for explaining various ideological elements from the fields of law, education, and art. The problem, discussed there relatively in detail (albeit fragmentarily), pertains to the application of the scheme of historical materialism to art, which is, allegedly, a “mere” phenomenon from the realm of ideological superstructure that is based on a specific-historical materialistic foundation and is supposed to derive therefrom.

Marx attempted there to account for the incongruence between the “eternal”—rather than relative or mere specific-historical—greatness of ancient Greek art (especially the Greek epic) and the factual consequence derived from a materialist philosophy of history, maintaining that this age-old element of ideology, Greek art, is based on a primitive mode of production, involving a primitive level of consciousness. Hence, ostensibly it can only be relevant (as a source of meaning and for authentic, aesthetic experiences) to its contemporaries, who had lived in and sustained that ancient mode of production. More specifically, Marx attempted to justify the answer to the problem, how members of the “current” historical period—modern England, an industrialized country in the second half of the nineteenth century—can experience in an authentic-aesthetic manner, based on their developed mode of production, the beauty of the Greek epic, which evolved between the tenth and the eighth centuries BCE on the background of a primitive mode of production in those days of antiquity. Ostensibly, as follows from the materialist philosophy of history, the Greek epic is supposed to be irrelevant, in every respect of an aesthetic experience, to members of an industrialized-

modern society who sustain the developed material foundation and subsist by it. According to Marx:

Is the view of nature and of social relations on which the Greek imagination [*Phantasie*] and hence Greek [mythology] is based possible with self-acting mule spindles and railways and locomotives and electrical telegraphs? What chance has Vulcan against Roberts & Co., Jupiter against the lightning-rod and Hermes against the Credit Mobilier? All mythology overcomes and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in the imagination [*Einbildung*] and by the imagination; it therefore vanishes with the advent of real mastery over them. What becomes of Fama alongside Printing House Square? [. . .] From another side: is Achilles possible with powder and lead? Or the Iliad with the printing press, not to mention the printing machine? Do not the song and the saga and the muse necessarily come to an end with the printer's bar, hence do not the necessary conditions of epic poetry vanish? (Marx [1857/8] 1973, 110–111)

In Marx's explanation of the emergence of ancient Greek art he binds it integrally with Greek mythology, and only indirectly and in mediated form with the material social existence itself. He seems to imply that mythology served Greek art not only as an "arsenal" of images and symbols (as it might serve us, for example), but rather as a "foundation," as a real system of consciousness that strives (like a scientific system) to control natural forces cognitively:

Greek art presupposes Greek mythology, i.e. nature and the social forms already reworked in an unconsciously artistic way by the popular imagination [*Volksphantasie*]. This is its material [. . .] in any case, a mythology. Hence, in no way a social development which excludes all mythological, all mythologizing relations to nature, which therefore demands of the artist an imagination not dependent on mythology. (Marx [1857/8] 1973, 110)

Ostensibly, it is clear that modern man can no longer experience, in an unmediated manner, the mythological characters and images (representations, as we call them) as constituting (rather than merely simulating, symbolizing or representing) natural forces and social entities. In this respect, one may indeed say that the consciousness of the ancient Greek, during tenth to eighth centuries BCE, is fundamentally different from that of a modern person who can seek rational answers to natural or social forces in the various sciences, and thereby attempt to control these forces—to constitute a "real mastery" over nature, and not only "in the imagination and by the imagination."

Nonetheless, I would like to present here three clarifications with regard to the above argument and its possible implications on the issue in question:

1. The Greek epic and Greek art in general are not mythology itself, but rather a representation of it, namely an artistic expression. Marx too, I believe, does not refer to the Greek epic as mythology itself, but rather maintains, as aforesaid, that mythology served it, the epic, as a foundation.¹
2. Mythology—being a form of religious-artistic consciousness, the product of popular imagination, that serves, as aforesaid, as a foundation for Greek art and the Greek epic—is, in itself, an “ideology” (according to the prevalent terms of historical materialism); to wit, mythology itself is but an expression (albeit one that maintains an integral relation to its material foundation, and not a mere “fad”) from the realm of superstructure, ostensibly derived from the economic foundation, from the specific-historical social existence of the undeveloped mode of production in ancient Greece. In other words, Marx’s explanations about the unique affinity of Greek art to mythology—as true as they may be—were not meant to and cannot resolve the difficulty in applying the historical materialism to art, but on the contrary—they only make it more difficult.
3. Even if we were to assume that Greek art equals mythology (and not only representative images thereof), and even if we were to assume that Greek mythology—inasmuch as its characters are perceived by the ancient Greek as natural forces and social entities (and not only as symbolical or representative of these)—is not a constituent element in the ideological superstructure, but rather an element of the materialistic foundation itself (according to an interpretation of historical materialism that refers to the evolutionary level of “science”—“mythology” in the context of Homeric Greek—as an element of the material foundation, and not merely as an ideological form), even then the problem would only be made more difficult; for it implies that nothing can link the existence and consciousness of the modern human being to those of the ancient Greek any longer. Nevertheless, we too still perceive and deem the Greek epic a masterpiece and as pertinent to us in terms of aesthetic experience not less than are contemporary works of art.

Indeed, the difficulty in applying a materialist philosophy of history to art, which Marx himself raises as a problem, “lies not in understanding that the Greek arts and epic are bound up with certain forms of social development,” whether materialistic (the primitive mode of production in Greece) or consciousness-oriented (Greek mythology), for precisely such a specific-historical link is implied by historical materialism. The difficulty, according to Marx, lies in the fact that the Greek arts and epic “still afford us artistic

pleasure and that in a certain respect they count as a norm and as an unattainable model” (Marx [1857/8] 1973, 111).

His answer to this difficulty seems to assume certain basic concepts from Hegel’s metaphysical philosophy of history, whereby “history recurs” such that earlier moments in the history of mankind are once again reflected “maturely” in more developed periods, and thus remain relevant in its later appearances as well (Hegel [1840] 1956, 345–346). In his reply to the question under consideration here Marx likens the ancient Greeks to the “normal children” of human civilization, while comparing the members of the “contemporary” period—who authentically-aesthetically experience ancient Greek art—to an adult observing child’s play, drawing from it great pleasure and insights about himself. He maintains that:

[a] man cannot become a child again, or he becomes childish. But does he not find joy in the child’s naïveté, and must he himself not strive to reproduce its truth at a higher stage? Does not the true character of each epoch come alive in the nature of its children? Why should not the historic childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return, exercise an eternal charm? There are unruly children and precocious children. Many of the old peoples belong in this category. The Greeks were normal children. The charm of their art for us is not in contradiction to the undeveloped stage of society on which it grew. [It] is its result, rather, and is inextricably bound up, rather, with the fact that the unripe social conditions under which it arose, and could alone arise, can never return. (Marx [1857/8] 1973, 111)

Marx’s reply to the difficulty in applying the historical materialistic scheme to art, as quoted above, is hardly an appropriate answer; rather, it is a nice excuse, an attempt to illustrate the relationship between modern human beings and ancient Greek civilization. To my mind, however, it is actually an unsatisfactory explanation. It lacks apt advocacy of historical materialism vis-à-vis what appears to be an undermining of the scheme of a materialistic philosophy of history by the phenomenon of fine art, great art. In this context, Herbert Marcuse, as part of his critique of orthodox-Marxist aesthetics, asserted that:

Marxist aesthetics assumes that all art is *somehow* conditioned by the relations of production, class position, and so on. Its first task (but only its first) is the specific analysis of this “somehow,” that is to say, of the limits and modes of this conditioning. The question as to whether there are qualities of art which transcend specific social conditions and how these qualities are related to the particular social conditions remains open. Marxist aesthetics has yet to ask: What are the qualities of art which transcend the specific social content and form and give art its universality? Marxist aesthetics must explain why Greek tragedy and the medieval epic, for example, can still be experienced today as “great,” “authentic” literature, even though they pertain to ancient slave soci-

ety and feudalism respectively. Marx's remark at the end of *The Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* is hardly persuasive; one simply cannot explain the attraction of Greek art for us today as our rejoicing in the unfolding of the social "childhood of humanity." (Marcuse [1978] 1979, 14–15)

In defense of Marx on this matter one may say, perhaps, that he himself did not publish *The Grundrisse*; excerpts from these texts were first published in 1903, some forty-five years after they had been written, approximately twenty years after Marx's passing; the full manuscript was first published many years later, only in 1939–1941. Had he published this discussion himself, he might have probably altered his explanation of the fact that the Greek epic still forms a vital source for an authentic-aesthetic experience, even though it had been composed during the tenth to the eighth centuries BCE. In any event, works written by Marx following *The Grundrisse*—the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and the three-volumed *Capital* (1867 on)—contain no systematic reference to this tough question.

Even in the wake of Marx's attempt to resolve the problem, it remains intact: We deem the *Iliad* outstanding, an "eternal charm," a source for refining beauty and deep insights, for an authentic-aesthetic experience, probably not less than it had been "in its time." And if that is the case, does it follow that we are its "contemporaries" in terms of relevance, just as the ancient Greeks were? Moreover, one ought to repeat the question, whether and in what respect is art indeed an ideological phenomenon, which is allegedly a mere expression of "its" specific-historical social existence? In short—being an ideological form, what is art's relation to "its" reality?

I shall try to answer these questions, and thus promote the discussion, first by scrutinizing the nature of "ideology," and subsequently by perusing the nature of the "reality" to which ideology is supposed to relate and from which it is supposed to be derived.

For Marx, ideology, in its diverse manifestations, is the "forms in which men become conscious" of reality with its upheavals, thereby striving to confront and dominate this reality.² This perception of ideology may also be understood as a Marxian "translation" into the language of sociological thought of the concept "absolute spirit" in Hegelian metaphysics. Hegel (on whose method Marx relied in certain respects, while criticizing it vigorously in others) held that in the realm of the "absolute spirit"—art, religion, philosophy—the spirit (the substance, the universe, the phenomena of human existence in their historical totality) becomes self-conscious, articulating its truths in various ways, unique as well as general, covert and overt: in works of art (via emotions, images and representations), in religious phenomena (via the experience of faith, dogmas and representations), and in philosophical thoughts (via rational-conceptual contemplation) (Hegel [1817] 1930, [§§553ff] 474ff.; Hegel [1835] 1975, 7). Hegel referred to mythology, for

example, as a phenomenon from the realm of “Absolute Spirit,” maintaining that mythology “is indeed a product of the imagination, but not of caprice, although that also has its place here. But the main part of mythology is the work of the imaginative reason, which makes reality [*Wesen*, essence] its object [like philosophy, –ZT], but yet has no other means of so doing, than that of sensuous representation” (Hegel [1833] 1995, 81–82).

Marx’s concept of ideology does not differ in this respect from Hegel’s perception of the “absolute spirit,” despite all the differences between their philosophies. The ideological expressions, like phenomena from the realm of “absolute spirit,” are but reflections of the social existence within which they were created. While they may emerge as a false, illusive, concealing, mystical conscious expression of real existence, nevertheless this emergence can expose the truth of that very existence; they strive to touch upon the essence of reality, which is not identical to its visible phenomena, and present it (the essence, the truth) in different ways. This revealing expression of the truth—in art, religion and philosophy—is not direct-positive, but rather mediated (via images, representations, experiences, faith, dogmas, concepts). It is a “not-unmediated” expression that transcends reality and is transformative, negative, with regard to it (via the power of imagination, faith and theoretical thought, and due to the unique—meta-reality—ontological status of their products), thus confronting the reality whose truths it strives to expose; otherwise, it would not have been capable of exposing them, but would have continued to replicate and reproduce reality itself and would have emerged as an undifferentiated part of it. The various ideological forms, just like the phenomena of the “absolute spirit,” are not akin to reality itself (and therefore may also emerge as “falsity” or “illusion”), but, at any rate, they are tantamount to meta-reality—forms of self-consciousness, even when that consciousness is, according to Marx, but “conscious existence.”

Marx was familiar with the revealing power of ideology, which acquires an expression of truth even in its falsehood and mystification, not only in his relation to the great works of art (especially literature, which he deeply admired and often addressed), not only in his relation to the philosophical speculations (in which he was well-versed, and whose course he continued even though he was somehow an “anti-philosopher”), but also concerning religion (which, as is well known, he rejected outright and criticized strenuously). Thus, for example, in his famous statement about religion, being “the opium of the people,” namely a false-illusive element of life, he says: “Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions” (Marx [1844a] 1975, 175).

Hence, the ideological expression, in Marx’s case too, is not only a direct reflection of the reality of “its” specific social existence, but also emerged in

other relations to it. It can emerge as a *camera-obscura*-like reversal (Marx and Engels [1845] 1976, 36), as a distorted image of reality, or as a distorted image of reality which is in itself “distorted.” In any event, even when “consciousness [*das Bewußtsein*] can never be anything else than conscious existence [*das bewußte Sein*, conscious being]” (Marx and Engels [1845] 1976, 36), it does not follow that it is a passive, direct reflection of reality, but, on the contrary, that it also carries a negative power with regard to it—it negates the direct, unmediated understanding and/or experiencing of things, thus opposing, if only in its forms, their positive, given, established appearance—just as “religious suffering” (to quote Marx above) is concurrently an expression of the real Vale of Tears and at the same time a protest against it; this, to my mind, via the attempt to expose the essence, the truth, at its core. In the context of art as “ideology,” Marcuse maintains:

[T]he radical potential of art lies precisely in its ideological character, in its transcendent relation to the “basis.” Ideology is not always *mere* ideology, false consciousness. The consciousness and the representation of truths which appear as abstract in relation to the established process of production are also ideological functions. Art presents one of these truths. As ideology, it opposes the given society. (Marcuse [1978] 1979, 13)

What are the phenomena of social existence to which the ideological expressions refer and from which they are supposed to derive? I would like to distinguish here between two aspects of these phenomena: Reality, being concrete, is indeed the totality of specific-historical phenomena. At the same time, however, these phenomena embody more general, trans-historical and even supra-historical elements—namely, general qualities of human existence which remain constant throughout the different historical periods. These form a type of essence—elements which the specific-historical phenomena embody in a concrete, specific manner.

Thus, for example, with regard to the dimension of the forces of production, one may say that the productive metabolism between human beings and nature is a supra-historical essence which emerges in a general, trans-historical manner (through the various historical periods) in agriculture (*agricultura*); whereas plowing using human labor, a plow harnessed to beasts, a track-tractor driven by the burning power of diesel oil, or a computerized tractor—all these specific-historical phenomena embody, in a different, varying, concrete manner in each period, the trans-historical element of tilling the land.

As for the dimension of the relations of production, Marx and Engels sum up the quintessential trans-historical element at the beginning of the first chapter of their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, as follows: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle” (Marx and Engels [1848] 1958, 34). Indeed the specific forms of class stratification

which express the social division of labor change in different historical periods—masters and slaves, lords and serfs, or capitalists and wage-laborers—but according to Marx's concept, these specific-historical relations of production embody the general, trans-historical element of the class struggle; for all hitherto existing societies maintained their material foundation, the very life in social existence, by means of domination and repression that perpetuate a class differentiation, by the exploitation of man and the appropriation of his labor by other men—via alienation between man and nature, between man and man, and between man and himself. These indeed change the form of concrete phenomena in which they are embodied according to the different epochs, but their essence remains unchanged throughout all periods of history until now.

Based on this view as well—let alone based on the unmediated observation of the horrors that occurred in the course of twentieth century history—one may say, as held by members of the Frankfurt School, that in terms of man-man relations, in terms of the essence of the relations of production, there has been no fundamental progress in the history of human civilization. Although the forms of repression, exploitation and control have changed, in themselves they have remained intact and even become more sophisticated—gradually more rational and efficient—concurrent with the constantly progressive improvement of the forces of production (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 1973, xiii, 8–9, 11–13, 28–29, 34–42, etc.; Marcuse [1956] 1961, 82–83; Marcuse [1964] 1972, 1–3, 17–18, 253–254). In this trans-historical sense, one may say that the “class struggle” itself, including the trans-historical elements of repression, exploitation and control in man-man relations (relations of production), prevail in the modern era, determining our lives as they transpired in ancient Greece.

Furthermore—and here the discussion goes beyond Marx's orderly reflections, becoming somewhat existentialist—not only the specific phenomena of the class struggle, that embody the feature of the relations of production in each and every epoch, express a trans-historical element in the totality of social life; for man's social life contains phenomena of “struggle” which are not directly, essentially linked with the class struggle, which likewise express in a specific-historical manner trans-historical, antagonistic, essential features; phenomena such as conflicts of generation rivalry, the opposition between the individual and the public, the self and the other, the conflicts between the sexes, the absurd relations between Eros and Thanatos (the grand theme in literature and art in general), etc. These elements are also concretely embodied in different, varying specific-historical phenomena, even though their origin is, clearly, trans-historical. In this sense too, one may say that these trans-historical essences in social life transpire in the modern era and determine our lives as they transpired in ancient Greece.

Thus, being a revealing, negating expression, art, great art, may be said to refer—albeit by means of representative images that ostensibly express specific-historical phenomena, as if they were mere ideological forms—to the trans-historical essences of social existence. Discussing art's liberating power, Marcuse says in this context that:

[t]he obvious difference in the representation of the subversive potential is due to the difference in social structure with which these works are confronted: the destruction of oppression among the population, the composition and function of the ruling class, the given possibilities of radical change. These historical conditions are present in the work in several ways: explicitly, or as background and horizon, and in the language and imagery. But they are the specific historical expressions and manifestations of the same transhistorical substance of art: its own dimension of truth, protest and promise, a dimension constituted by the aesthetic form. (Marcuse [1978] 1979, xi–xii)

Thus, the character of the hero Achilles—weeping in grief, offended and angry for having been betrayed by king Agamemnon—who turns to his mother for consolation, and the figure of Thetis, his mother, who experiences and identifies with her son's distress, are as relevant to us as in Homer's time; thus, Oedipus's obsessive, tragic-destructive ambition for self-knowledge of his true identity, or Antigone's crucial demand of Creon, are as pertinent to us as they were in Sophocles's time; thus also the adamant struggle against death embodied by Sisyphus; thus Prometheus's actions against the gods and for humanity, which the young Marx regarded as a model for the perception of enlightenment that is granted a general expression in Hegel's philosophy (Marx [1839] 1975, 491; Marx [1840/1] 1975, 29–31); thus also the masterful figure of Odysseus in Homer, which Horkheimer and Adorno do not hesitate to treat as an archetype of domination in modern bourgeois existence (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 1973, 32ff).

According to this view, great art is relevant in terms of the aesthetic experience throughout history, since it strives to expose, in its unique way, through the specific-historical forms, the trans-historical essential features in social existence, the essences that remain valid even through the revolutionary transformations in the level of the forces of production (man-nature relations) and in the varying forms of the relations of production (man-man relations).

In this respect, one ought to question the argument that in the history of art, throughout all its specific-historical changes, there is some fundamental progress, just as one ought to question, as aforesaid, the fundamental progress in man-man relations. In any event, one cannot identify a line of progress in the history of art (in the quintessential aesthetic sense, not in various technical respects); this, of course, as opposed to the progress typifying the history of the forces of production, describing progressive transfor-

mations (of control and technological efficiency) in the relations between human beings and nature throughout history.

The above examples of relevance, which remain unchanged throughout history, of certain representative characters from the literary works of ancient Greece, seem quite obvious since these works are thematic. Fundamentally, however, and via *mutatis-mutandis*, I believe that one may speak similarly about works of art that are less thematic than literary works, or distinctively non-thematic—visual art and musical works.

Through and beyond the thematic dimension of art works, however, through and beyond the specific-historical materials, through and beyond the linguistic, chemical, tonal materials, etc.—art stands in its totality, and the aesthetic experience it involves emerges. These, according to Immanuel Kant's concepts (which are also necessary to the perception introduced here)—sustain an autonomy (Kant [1790] 1987, 91–94; [§35] 151; [§59] 229), a sort of independent self-legislation that also applies to and sustains a realm of freedom (albeit ontologically bordered and limited), not only with regard to a specific-historical material, but also with regard to the trans-historical elements, with regard to the social reality being a “reality.” The work of art (as such) and its aesthetic experience are always a “presentation of the object [*Vorstellung des Gegenstandes*]” rather than “the existence of the object [*Existenz des Gegenstandes*]” (Kant [1790] 1987, [§2] 45–46); or, as Schiller puts it, they are an “appearance [*Schein*]” of reality, rather than “reality” itself (Schiller [1795] 1977, [26] 125). Based on this view, the aesthetic work and experience are tantamount to the free play (*Spiel*) of psychic forces as against the interested, heteronomous reality in which they exist (Kant [1790] 1987, [§9] 62; [§16] 76–77; [§35] 151; Schiller [1795] 1977, [15] 75–81); they transcend reality, and therefore negate it not only by exposing and denouncing it, but in their very ontological status, being an appearance, a representation and an image—non-reality.

The ontological status of the work of art and aesthetic experience, which differs from that of reality—although it is traditionally (since Plato) regarded as inferior to it—enables them to deviate from subservience to the heteronomous rules of reality itself, that subjugate man to an all-encompassing utilitarian interestedness. Only in such conditions can art expose the truth of that reality and its hidden essential features; only in such conditions can art negate and denounce reality. Great art, in this respect, is a beautiful island of autonomy surrounded by an ugly heteronomous ocean—“a golden ghetto in a world of grime.”

Being autonomous—a medium of exposure and denunciation as against the heteronomy of reality—the work of art (as such) and its aesthetic experience also form an emancipatory horizon with regard to reality. The radical-revolutionary idea which demands the constitution of a free reality and shaping social existence itself according to the model of the autonomy of the

work of art, was first introduced, as far as I know, in poet and philosopher Friedrich Schiller's "letters" *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Schiller [1795] 1977, [27] 137–138); this was also the concept of poet Heinrich Heine in his social ideal—Sensualism (Heine [1834] 1982, 12–13); this was the idea introduced in the twentieth century by the ideologue of Surrealism, André Breton (Breton [1924] 2000, 9–10); and this was also the revolutionary, radical idea of the Marxist, Herbert Marcuse (Marcuse [1956] 1961, 157ff).

Even in Marx's writings, however, one can find such references, albeit not systematically. In his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, for example, he maintains very clearly that the true productive activity of man (who is essentially a "producing-creature") can be accomplished only under conditions that negate the given reality, namely only in conditions of freedom from physical needs. Under such conditions man's producing is not instrumentally directed at his mere existence (or other purposes, including, of course, the production of surplus value, its accumulation and appropriation), but is rather fashioned "in accordance with the laws of beauty" (Marx [1844b] 1975, 277). In *The Grundrisse*, attempting to describe the nature of the labor ("realm of necessity"), which would underlie as a necessary condition the "realm of freedom," i.e., the realization of communist society, he maintains that it would indeed be hard work, albeit not alienated; it would be "most damned seriousness, the most intense exertion," "really free working, e.g. composing" (Marx [1857/8] 1973, 611), in other words: the creative activity of an artist.

In this respect too, one may see how great art, created in different periods of human history (including the ancient Greek epic), is still relevant to us in the reality of heteronomous life. Not only for the members of the previous eras, but also for those of the modern epoch, it forms a horizon of liberation—the appearance of autonomous human life unbounded by the unmediated needs of existence and the social domination that in reality sustains the system of production and consumption in a repressive, exploitative manner.

What is the meaning of the emancipatory horizon introduced by the work of art and its aesthetic experience? Does it follow that the realization of the "realm of freedom"—alleviating the antagonism underlying the alienating relations of production—in fact, leads to the "end of art?" For, ostensibly, the emancipatory characteristics of the work of art and the aesthetic experience—being negative with regard to the heteronomous, alienated reality, being revealing and denunciative—are supposed to dissolve once the appearance of that horizon is realized, becoming a present reality.

Herbert Marcuse raised this question in the chapter "Art and Revolution" of his *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972), written in the wake of the students' rebellion in the 1960s, and in the last book he published before his death, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (or under its German, more apt title—*Die*

Permanenz der Kunst, “The Permanence of Art”). In his reply to the aforementioned question he primarily introduces the existence of trans-historical elements in the social reality, in man-man relations, which do not directly articulate the relations of production or the production system as a whole (although they are conditioned by it, “in the last count,” as life itself), maintaining that these antagonistic life-elements (mentioned above) are not supposed to disappear from the social reality even when the Marxian “realm of freedom” is realized, and thus great art will always persist and be relevant, even in specific-historical circumstances of a free society. Discussing the affinity between art and the radical-revolutionary praxis, Marcuse asserts that:

[b]oth envision a universe which, while originating in the given social relationships, also liberates individuals from these relationships. This vision appears as the permanent future of revolutionary praxis. The notion of the continuation of the class struggle under socialism expresses this point, albeit in a distorted form. The permanent transformation of society under the principle of freedom is necessitated not only by the continued existence of class interests. The institutions of a socialist society, even in their most democratic form, could never resolve all the conflicts between the universal and the particular, between human beings and nature, between individual and individual. Socialism does not and cannot liberate Eros from Thanatos. Here is the limit which drives the revolution beyond any accomplished stage of freedom: it is the struggle for the impossible, against the unconquerable whose domain can perhaps nevertheless be reduced. (Marcuse [1978] 1979, 71–72)³

To wit: this is the most radical, indefatigable and absurd, revolutionary-utopist, emancipatory struggle of art as such. Great art, as an emancipatory horizon, is revealed as a real horizon for the struggle of social praxis for human liberation; namely, as a permanent purpose that constantly sets new liberation goals, even when the old ones have been obtained, or seemingly obtained. It does not come to an end even within a human reality that may realize radical-revolutionary perceptions of human liberation, such as Marx’s emancipatory “realm of freedom.” Moreover, it remains relevant—being an expression of, negating and denouncing, essence-revealing, autonomous relations—within the heteronomous reality of the extant social existence.

If this be the case, then the creation of the Greek epic, the *Iliad*, which would continue to express its “eternal charm” even when the Marxian “realm of freedom” is realized in a now-unforeseeable future, if ever, remains all the more pertinent to us, through and despite all the upheavals of history since the days of ancient Greece.

NOTES

1. Although the Greek epos is considered by Marx still an ancient form of art, prior to the social division of labor in which already “the production of art [*Kunstproduktion*], as such, begins” (Marx [1857/8] 1973, 110), i.e., the Greek epos was still integrally involved in other social institutions: agriculture, political domination and governing, religion, army, medicine, etc.
2. According to Marx’s famous formulation in his *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx [1859] 1958, 363).
3. See also similar expressions in Marcuse 1972, 103–104, 121.

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Chapter Twelve

A Labor Theory of Ethics and Commonwealth

Recalling a “New” Marcuse

Charles Reitz

When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.

—Dom Hélder Câmara, former Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, Brazil

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.

—Che Guevara

The U.S. has more poverty than any other advanced industrial nation in the world even though it has more wealth. As Henry Giroux’s essay has emphasized above, the problem is not lack of resources, but how those resources are allocated and used. Stephen Spartan and I endeavored in this volume’s Chapter 1 to demonstrate how a system of capital appropriation and accumulation is embedded within global capitalism’s commodified production process and how this enforces the impoverishment and deformation of the labor force internationally. There has been a systemic over-appropriation of surplus such that a capital glut has saturated the usual high-return investment arenas and the capital overflow cannot easily find maximal returns. Hence there has been an immense and ongoing diversion of Gross Domestic Product into desperate and self-destructive speculative investment strategies attempting to counteract the intensifying capital-valorization crisis. In our analysis of the roots of the contemporary economic and political crisis, we explored the political-economic foundations of the structured wealth inequalities in the U.S. These adversely impact all social institutions, education, criminal jus-

tice, and health care, and have generated the crisis and the failure in 2008 of what was considered the world's strongest financial system, though it could not manage its assets without the near self-destruction of major Wall Street institutions. We disclosed how and why the cultural logic of decommodification must undergird a broad-based political activism today. David Brodsky's essay highlighted the contemporary war on labor, and introduced *Charter 2000*, a comprehensive political program for labor to make gains in today's historical circumstance. *Charter 2000's* compendium of universal rights and entitlements helps us re-imagine labor's future consistent with a philosophy of labor humanism. Through pursuit of the *Charter's* specific planks as minimal demands, a concrete economic program may be built-up moving ultimately toward socialism's revolutionary goals. Such are the current concerns this volume has addressed.

In this chapter I take a closer look at the philosophical framework I have adapted from Herbert Marcuse, *recalling* key, yet often-underestimated, dimensions of his critical theory—his ontology of labor, his socialist humanism, and his insistence on the radical goals of socialism. I use the word “recall” dialectically here: as German philosophy uses the concept *Aufhebung*—meaning simultaneously to raise up, elevate, preserve, annul, refine, and supersede. This means I have pursued an appreciation of Marcuse's theoretical strengths going beyond weaknesses discussed elsewhere (Kellner 1973; Reitz 2000). My engagement with Marcuse's philosophy is intended thus to liberate *the critical* in his critical theory. I am recalling a “new” Marcuse.

In Herbert Marcuse one encounters what is lacking in other members of the Frankfurt School: an analysis of advanced industrial society (Wiggershaus 1988, 676). Marcuse's critical social theory has special relevance to U.S. culture today centering on his analysis of the *commodified labor process* as a structural source of social inequality and economic crisis, and the *power of labor* to liberate itself from commodification and exploitation to make commonwealth the human condition.

Capitalism has long been armed with its own theories of work and wealth; within the labor force a critical understanding of work has atrophied.¹ Herbert Marcuse is perhaps most famously noted for his contention that labor, narcotized and anaestheticized by consumerism and in collusion with business priorities, lacks a critical appreciation of the potential of a philosophy of labor to transcend existing society. “Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole” (Marcuse 1964, 2). Given capitalism's tendency toward recurrent crises, Marcuse certainly understood that this was *not* a permanent condition, and that in spite of the dominant state of system-stability, regular episodes of economic collapse reveal that:

“forces and tendencies exist which may break this containment and explode the society” (Marcuse 1964, xv).

Marcuse knew that because capitalism exists, so too does exploitation, and that *system change* is necessary and *possible* if we comprehend and refuse the system. He stressed that system change requires a twofold refusal: of its mode of production and the repressive satisfactions that replicate it. Over the last several decades there has been a regression in the comprehensiveness of critical theory. Returning to Marcuse’s work can fill-in some of the key and notable economic deficits of contemporary forms of cultural commentary stemming from postmodern literary, aesthetic, and political theory.

Marcuse’s analysis of the alienation and commodification of labor acknowledges the power of the workforce to enact and lead social change. His assessment undergirds a theory of labor humanism aiming at the dis-alienation of our essentially sensuous and creative practical and productive activities. Public ownership of socially produced wealth is *the* revolutionary starting point² for labor that can transform the contemporary human condition and re-create the labor process to reflect fully our human potential. Incomes must be de-linked from private property ownership and reconnected to human needs, public work,³ and *public wealth*.

Socialism in its most radical sense is more than a philosophy of good government. It is a philosophy of authentically human existence and the fulfillment of both human needs and the political promise of our human nature, where creative freedom provides the foundation for satisfaction in all of our works. Marcuse and Marx asserted *a radically materialist conception of the essence of socially active human beings*: seen from the outside, we are the ensemble of our social relations; seen from the inside, we are *sensuous living labor*. This core sensuousness is tended by our empathic human capacity to care, a capacity more primordial than Heidegger’s *Sorgestruktur*, going back to the empathic “humanism” found in the behavior of primates (de Waal 2013). Humanistic sensibilities characterize the social core of our being, our sensuous practical activities, our subsistence strategies, our communal labor.

MARCUSE’S LABOR THEORY OF HUMANISM AND/OR HUMANIST THEORY OF LABOR

Douglas Kellner’s (1973) essay with regard to *the concept of labor* in the development of Marcuse’s thought is a remarkable exception to a general neglect of this material, and has been an important stimulus to my own commentary. During the 1930s and 1940s Marcuse ([1933] 1973a) elaborated an “ontology of labor”—a philosophy grounded in the human condition as living labor. This ontology of labor is reprised in Marcuse’s little-known last

publication dealing with the nature of the “proletariat,” and his final thoughts reinforce the labor humanist and commonwealth foundations of the critical philosophy that he shares with Marx: “The working class still is the ‘ontological’ antagonist of capital” (Marcuse 1979).

Marcuse early on developed a critical study of work and social alienation looking at economic activity within the total complexity of other human activities and human existence in general. In his 1933 essay “On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor in Economics” labor is seen as the key *activity* by which *humanity exteriorizes itself* and also *humanizes the world*. In addition to persons directly involved in the labor force, others like politicians, artists, researchers, and clergy also *do work* in his estimation. He contends that “labor is an ontological concept of human existence as such” (Marcuse [1933] 1973a, 11). We enhance our self-expression and flourishing through labor, and this can take multiple forms. Marcuse builds upon Hegel’s theory of the laboring consciousness overcoming its alienated existence and attaining an emancipated perception of its authentic self (Marcuse [1930] 1976, 36). He tied this also to Marx’s historical and dialectical theory of social revolution as having the *singular purpose* of labor’s supersession of “capitalist commodity production” (Ibid., 38).

Marcuse likewise honors Marx’s philosophical humanism as “The Foundation of Historical Materialism.” In his essay under that title (Marcuse [1932] 1973b) Marcuse emphasizes that Marx (in the 1844 Manuscripts) repeatedly identifies a genuine concept of communism with a humanist worldview, and that the alienation theory articulated there by Marx looks to the supersession of alienation through the actualization of the human essence (Marcuse [1932] 1973b, 7–8). Raya Dunayevskaya stands out among Marcuse commentators in emphasizing Marcuse’s—and Marx’s—philosophical humanism: “Marcuse established the Humanism of Marxism, and re-established the revolutionary dialectic of Hegel-Marx for the first time for the American public” (Dunayevskaya 2012, 233). Both Marcuse and Marx, in her estimation, saw “economics” as a “philosophy of human activity” in which “labor was seen as the living subject bringing all contradictions to a head and making socialism ‘inevitable.’” (2012, 96). Of course Erich Fromm, author of *Marx’s Concept of Man* (1961), also famously invited Herbert Marcuse and Raya Dunayevskaya to contribute to Fromm’s edited collection, *Socialist Humanism* (1965), invitations they both accepted.

I have indicated above that human beings are not only the ensemble of our social relations, we are sensuous living labor, a view I derive from Marx and Marcuse in the following manner. Marx’s first thesis on Feuerbach reads: “The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively” (emphasis in original). In *Reason and Revolu-*

tion ([1941] 1960) Marcuse cites Marx on the centrality of *labor* to human existence and criticizes the lack of labor theory in the sensualism of Feuerbach:

Because he conceived human existence in terms of sense, Feuerbach disregarded this material function of labor altogether. ‘Not satisfied with abstract thought, Feuerbach appeals to sense-perception [Anschauung]; but *he does not understand our sensuous nature as practical, human-sensuous activity.*’ Labor transforms the natural conditions of human existence into social ones. By omitting the labor process from his philosophy of freedom, therefore, Feuerbach omitted the decisive factor through which nature might become the medium for freedom. (Marcuse [1941] 1960, 272, emphasis added)

Thus Marcuse, like Marx, emphasized that labor must be seen as a central dimension of human life beyond its narrow confines within a commodified economy. They understood human alienation as estranged labor: sensuous living labor’s separation from: 1) its product, 2) the process of production, 3) other producers, and 4) from our species need for the gratification of our sensuous, intellectual, political and ethical faculties. For a detailed discussion of the general parameters of the formative role of labor in human development and the genesis of human culture, see especially Charles Woolfson, *The Labor Theory of Culture* (1982). Woolfson stresses Frederick Engels’s contributions to this theory (based upon the notes of Marx’s own reading and research) in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* ([1884] 1972) which holds that the way humanity has produced the means of its subsistence (through social organization and cooperation rather than domination) has produced also the “species character” of human beings. In Woolfson’s estimation the broad outlines of Engels’s theory are confirmed by contemporary research, including that of Louis, Mary, and Richard Leakey (1994, 1978) in archeology, linguistics, and paleontology.

Marx’s labor theory of culture is vividly expressed in *Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 7, on the labor process. He connects his theory to that of Benjamin Franklin, whom he credits with defining humanity as a tool-making animal.

As soon as the labor process has undergone the slightest development, it requires specially prepared instruments. Thus we find stone implements and weapons in the oldest caves. In the earliest period of human history, domesticated animals, i.e. animals that have undergone modification by means of labor, that have been bred specially, play the chief part as instruments of labor along with stones, wood, bones, and shells, which have also had work done on them. The use and construction of instruments of labor, although present in germ in among certain species of animals, is characteristic of the specifically human labor process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a “tool-making animal.” (Marx [1867] 1976, 286)

Marx also quite famously connected the human labor process with human insight into forms of the ideal, even an aesthetic ideal:

A spider conducts operations which resemble those of the weaver, and a bee would put many an architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labor process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally. (Marx [1867] 1976, 284)

What Marx believed was true for all authentically free productive labor was also true for art—a point not lost on Marcuse who in 1969 would come to highlight the possibility of the aesthetic as a *gesellschaftliche Produktivkraft* (Marcuse 1969, 26, 45), a social and productive force (Reitz 2000, 113).

Marcuse's labor humanism also played a key philosophical role when in 1947 Marcuse drafted "33 Theses," a document intended to outline his contribution for a revitalized re-launching of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* [Journal of Social Research] (Kellner 1998, 216). First published in 1998, this draft statement voiced elements quite characteristic of classical Marxism: "The production apparatus developed under capitalism, propelled by wage labor within the existing form of the division of labor, perpetuates the existing forms of consciousness and needs. . . . [T]he revolutionary working class . . . alone has the real power to abolish existing relations of production and the entire apparatus that goes with it" (Marcuse [1947] 1998, 222–23).

The very last piece that Marcuse published in 1979 re-establishes his 1933 thesis that "the proletariat is, by its very existence, a (the) potentially revolutionary force—this quality being definitive of its very existence" (1979, 20). Employing Rudolf Bahro's theory⁴ of "surplus consciousness" (Bahro 1977a, 376ff; 1977b) Marcuse argues against his previous emphasis in *One Dimensional Man* (1964) on the system-integration of the consciousness of the workforce. In his estimation under the changed socio-economic conditions of 1977–1978, a "counter-consciousness" (Marcuse 1979, 21) was already emerging that made it possible for the consciousness "of the underlying population [to be] penetrated by the inherent contradictions of capitalism" (1979, 21). Echoing his essays on labor humanism (1932) and the concept of labor in economics (1933) discussed above, he emphasizes: "The working class still is the 'ontological' antagonist of capital" (Marcuse 1979, 20).

Zvi Tauber's philosophical contribution in this volume on Marcuse's aesthetics of liberation focuses on an appreciation of the trans-historical dimension of art within its specific-historical content. He develops an understanding of the classic question of how the existence and consciousness of modern humans and the ancient Greeks, for example, can be interlinked such that we

can recognize and enjoy the art of antiquity. Utilizing Hegel, Marx, and Marcuse as sources, Tauber highlights Hegel's view that the phenomena of human existence in their historical totality develop a sense of truth about the human condition that is trans-historical, general, and universal. He then explains how Hegel's historical analysis of the phenomena of human existence is translated by Marx into sociological language. The conscious expression of this sense of humanity's real social existence in great art, such as in Greek tragedy, is to be seen as both a disclosure of life's real possibilities and a denunciation of life's real limitations.

A LABOR THEORY OF ETHICS AND COMMONWEALTH

I would like to propose in a manner of my own, yet analogous to Tauber's treatment of art, that trans-historical insights can also emerge from a non-religious, demystifying reading of the history of ethical thought in the world's traditions of moral philosophy. I understand ethics here as rooted in specific-historical realities and practices and at the same time as a negation of these realities raised to a higher, ideal level. The ideals are themselves *practical*: aiming at the transformation and pacification of everyday conflict. I contend they too can be understood in social and material terms that can ground a materialist theory of ethics and commonwealth.

The feminist anthropologist Riane Eisler (1987) introduced the term "partnership power" to describe cultural patterns in which men and women may have different roles, yet these are not unequal. Though Eisler studied early Minoan civilization, similar qualities of ethical and political partnership have been noted as characteristic of the gathering and hunting societies and other largely egalitarian social formations prior to agriculture in which all persons were more alike than different (Nolan and Lenski 2005). Solidarity and partnership power, rather than what Eisler calls "dominator power," generally characterized human relationships.

Humanity's first explicitly ethical maxims emerged as the proverbs that in a general way regulated life in the earliest African partnership cultures. These cultures centered on the customary sense of empathy and principles of reciprocity and solidarity in communal life, team work, modesty and mutuality, and included the first formulations of the golden rule. According to philosophy professor Godwin Azenabor (2008, 234) of the University of Lagos, writing of the underlying identity of African proverbs and Kant's categorical imperative, "[W]hat is moral is what promotes the well-being of the society by way of harmonization of interest and peaceful co-existence." Of course there could be conflict within and between tribes. Nonetheless, these proverbs constituted universalizable humanist, i.e., not narrowly tribal, teachings for the guidance of practical life, and can in no way to be confused

with purely religious teachings. “The cotton thread says that it is only as a team that you can carry a stone.” “Many hands make light work.” “It takes a whole village to raise a child.” Not gods, but communally laboring humanity can be seen as the source of ethics here.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1965), citing the work of African philosophers, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Sekou Toure, has also emphasized: “From 1958 to 1961 the African revolutions gave proof to a new third world whose philosophy, again, was humanism” (Dunayevskaya 1965, 65). Of course, today many observers consider African cultures to be notoriously religious, some also profoundly misogynistic. Yet the secular humanistic foundations of African moral philosophy are soundly attested to by scholars such as Kwame Gyekye (2010), Kwasi Wiredu (1991) and Alfred T. Kisubi (this volume, Chapter 14).

In ancient China, the Dao was regarded the “way” of the world. Opposites interpenetrated and emerged out of the other in a dialectical manner (centuries before Hegel and Marx developed their elaborations of the notion). Understanding the interconnectedness of all things, the yin/yang dynamics of both nature and human life, was necessary for concrete thinking and itself a social product. “Lay plans for the accomplishment of the difficult before it becomes difficult; make something big by starting with it when small” (*Dao De Jing*, LXIII). Today information processing would call this methodology a form of enhanced decision-making through systems analysis. Daoism’s dialectical naturalism and humanism taught harmony, balance, gentleness, and equanimity with regard to life’s changes. It accepted significant social inequalities, yet was skeptical of official knowledge. Political authority was considered legitimate only if it assured the material well-being of the masses as the “mandate of heaven” required. Heaven was thus a metaphor for the satisfaction through politics of human needs. When the policies of the prevailing powers did not or could not meet the economic needs of the people, the people’s rights of rebellion and overthrow were to be exercised (Mèng Zǐ [Mencius], in Chan 2012).

For Kong Fuzi (Confucius) “heaven’s” mandate regarding the welfare of the common people also defined the purpose of government. An early form of a labor theory of ethics and justice may also be extrapolated from the *Analects*: “The head of a state or noble family worries not about underpopulation but about uneven distribution. . . . [W]here there is even distribution there is no such thing as poverty” (*Analects* XVI.1). Humanist principles of benevolence, mutual regard, fairness, and humility are elaborated as *ren* or “human-heartedness.” This was illustrated through the Principle of the Measuring Square: if there are those behind you, treat them as you would have those *in front of you* treat you; if there are those below you, treat them as you would have those *above you* treat you. With regard to religious practices, Kong Fuzi advised: “[W]ork for the things the common people have a right

to and keep one's distance from gods and spirits while showing them reverence" (*Analects* VI.22). If one does not know how to serve one's comrades, how can one presume to serve gods (*Analects* XI.12). Rites in ancient China were observed in virtually all human affairs. They clearly went well beyond religion, and were part of everyday etiquette. Kong Fuzi taught open-mindedness, even in religion, with regard to these rites: "The asking of questions is in itself the correct rite" (*Analects* III.15). The golden rule appears as the injunction: "Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire" (*Analects* XV.24).

Ancient humanism in each of the forms above, was *not* a philosophy of the natural and unmediated goodness of human beings, as in the Romanticism of Rousseau. It was a philosophy of the humanizing influence of parents and teachers, customs, culture, and laws within a conflictual societal context. Plato's dialectics were borrowed from Socrates and derived from the high-level conversations, actually social debates, which could arrive at truth. Plato, as *political* educator in the *Republic*, furnishes us with his key cave allegory. Its first sentence raises the issue: to what extent have we become enlightened or unenlightened about our being? "Let me tell you in a parable about whether the mind of humans is educated or uneducated about human nature and the human condition" (Steph. VII, 514a). Plato understands the propensities of our sensuous living substance toward illusion, delusion, dishonor, and disgrace. At the same time his dialectical humanism stresses that to be enlightened/educated about our being and reality means we are capable of constructing from within ourselves rational knowledge addressing our uncertain general condition—resolving the appearance/reality conundrum in terms of an idea or model of the moral good to be pursued and obtained in our individual lives—including a "Platonic love" of learning, wisdom, the good society, and the good life. In sharp contrast to divine command theories of ethics and politics, which taught obedience to a supernatural protective authority above all else, Plato taught that critical thinking, rather than the unfathomable and arbitrary will of the gods, could determine right conduct. Plato argued that conventional beliefs about the visible and intelligible worlds are subject to question, and if not examined, they often lead to a shallow, disillusioned life. Education should remove the chains of illusion. An education to ideals as criteria of judgment makes possible the realization of our dignity and our greatest (intellectual and political) satisfactions. Rational minds learn through dialogue and debate as well as through logical deduction (mathematical reasoning). Study and inquiry can disclose how the best possible human relations and human communities may be constituted. He theorizes that justice is the characteristic of the public work of the leaders of the ideal city/state insofar as this political entity is governed by equal numbers of men and women educated to the (conflicted) human condition, living communally, with intelligence moderating appetite and spirit, disinter-

ested and detached from lust for property, power, fame, etc., devoutly acting in accordance (not with God's will, but) with principles we have deciphered as to what is substantively advantageous for the pacification of our conflicted species life.

Today we are aware of the African and Asian roots Plato's view of the world (Bernal 1991): how the *Republic* and the *Meno*, especially, share with Egyptian, Indian, and Buddhist philosophies cultural notions of communal harmonization, transmigration of souls/reincarnation in a caste system, enlightenment and equanimity. Plato's *Republic* did not include the general public as participants at any level of government, unless they first met educational qualifications, and this reflected existing aristocratic practice. Thus, many have seen his particular political and educational recommendations as authoritarian and conservative. His guardians seem legitimated as elite human beings. Still, Meno was a common slave-boy fully able to comprehend the highest forms of mathematical reasoning following the guidance of Socrates, thus he was a potential leader as well.

Marcuse stresses the *practical and subversive* nature of Plato's philosophy: "[T]he authentic, basic demand of idealism is that this material world be transformed and improved by knowledge of the Ideas. Plato's answer to this demand is his program for a reorganization of society" ([1937] 1968, 91–92). Likewise, we need to comprehend the proto-humanistic elements embedded in other ancient wisdom traditions such as Judaism and Hinduism.

Judaism requires us to do well the labor that confronts us as a necessity, to make amends annually to those we may have offended or to whom we may owe a debt, and it also supplies dozens of proverbs for right conduct. So too its veneration of the exodus from oppression and escape from slavery (a political-economic denunciation and liberation ethic which also abides in Islam and Christianity).

Hinduism teaches the ideal and power of *Dharma*: that benevolence is to be engraved in human hearts, and people are to live such they might become worthy of immortal bliss. The instrument of this ideal is the ostensible power of karma, the doctrine of reciprocity and the rise in the long run of the indestructible human species essence (Atman) within an individual to attain fulfillment, happiness, and nirvana. Only honest labor/action, consecrated by good will in work/struggle, detached from consequences, can lead to good fortune. A version of the golden rule rises once more in the *Mahabharata* in Dharma's famous questioning of Yudhishtira (in the "Virata"): "What is honesty?—That is to look and see every living creature as yourself, bearing your own will to live, and your own fear of death. . . . What is it that humanity calls good fortune?—That is the result of what they have done honestly" (Buck 1973, 121). The doctrine of karma legitimates dramatic and devastating social inequality, and like the caste system itself, these features have been negated and superseded through struggle in modern India. The

idea of karma may nevertheless be seen as a metaphor for the real social interconnectedness of the conditions facing newer generations as these have been impacted by the work, for better or worse, of older generations. This may also be seen as a token of the moral principle of reciprocity analogous to the Confucian doctrine of the Measuring Square. Nirmal Kumar Bose (1965) has stressed a view of Gandhi as a humanist and socialist, emphasizing his classic practice of *satyagraha*, the refusal to cooperate with unethical social conventions, and Gandhi's belief that honest labor undergirds a life worth living (Bose 1965, 90–91).

Buddhism, as a view of the world without gods, pursues the cessation of human suffering. Gotama Siddhartha, its founder, taught that we might become enlightened as to the human condition. At its root, therefore, Buddhism is an ethics of humanism, expressed most concisely in its *Four Noble Truths* [Proverbs]: Life is suffering; Suffering has its cause(s); These causes can be overcome; Act/work/live in that manner which relieves the suffering in oneself—and that of others (as does the socially activist figure of the Bodhisattva).

Buddha, Socrates, and Kong Fuzi preceded Aristotle by a full generation or more. Aristotle saw humanity as a political animal, the *zoon politikon*, and politics the master art in the proper fashioning of human life and human society. As Marcuse explains:

The doctrine that all human knowledge is oriented toward practice belonged to the nucleus of ancient philosophy. It was Aristotle's view that the truths arrived at through knowledge should direct practice in daily life as in the arts and sciences. In the struggle for existence, men need the effort of knowledge, the search for truth, because what is good, beneficial, and right for them is not immediately evident. (Marcuse [1937] 1968, 88)

Aristotle theorized that our highest happiness derived from the actualization of our essentially human capacities, powers, and potentials: speech/thought; worthy conduct, integrity, character, and moderation by way of the golden mean. Our task was to become intellectually and politically accomplished. To this end one's upbringing, parenting, education, and the social structure supportive of these nurturing forces, were the most crucial factors. Aristotle's naturalism and humanism inquired into the ways and means by which our species might thrive and flourish. In economics and ethics, a chief vice was the pursuit of property accumulation as money, and this beyond all bounds; a chief virtue, the pursuit of the well-being of the community (*Politics*, Chapter IX).

Among the key social teachings of medieval Islam, Christianity, and Judaism were those that preserved essential elements of Aristotle's philosophy of moderation in economic pursuits (condemning excess and insufficiency, the charging of interest, etc.). Ibn Khaldun is said to have adapted Aristotle's

political concept of humanity in the fourteenth century. His central notion of *asabiyyah* emphasized the sense of shared social purpose and solidarity making for community cohesion, and he developed a perspective on political economy rooted in the idea that all earnings derive from the value created through labor.

Bertrand Russell's essay "Why I am Not a Christian," ([1927] 1967) treats Jesus as a non-divine, human teacher. In the Sermon on the Mount once again the golden rule holds an honored position. This and other precepts and proverbs, however, are attested to by Russell as, by and large, a reprise of earlier teachings of the Daoist master, Laozi, as well as Buddha and Socrates on humility, forgiveness, loving-kindness, and generosity to the poor.

In the modern epoch Kant is thought to have philosophized about benevolence, good will, and the golden rule most prodigiously. He transfigures these into the proverbial categorical imperative: Never act except in such a way that your practice models what you would desire as the universal behavioral ideal. Against the notion of the supernatural origin of ethical standards, in his view *humanist* standards are the origin of everything that might be called truly sacred:

God is not a substance existing outside me, but merely a moral relation within me. . . . The categorical imperative does not assume a substance issuing its commands from on high, conceived therefore as outside me, but is a commandment or a prohibition of my own reason. . . . The categorical imperative represents human duties as divine commandments not in the historical sense, as if [a divine being] had given commands to men, but in the sense that reason . . . has the power to command with the authority and in the guise of a divine person. . . . The Idea of such a being, before whom all bend the knee, etc. arises out of the categorical imperative, and not vice versa.⁵

Kant saw enlightenment as political education: individuals, having formerly consented to remain silent with regard to political judgment, could emerge from this self-inflicted disfranchisement by using their own intellectual faculties to weigh and evaluate circumstances free of the political guidance of the prevailing religious and governmental authorities. Enlightenment political education could gradually bring us closer to a constitution establishing world citizenship, which he saw as also indispensable for the maintenance of the global public's human rights and hence also world peace. Though there was no talk of rights in early forms of ethical thinking, there is today a common language of human rights epitomized in the UN Universal Declaration (1948) also echoed in *Charter 2000*.

In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant argues the theoretical warrant for the emergence of a "universal cosmopolitan state" (Kant [1795] 1983, 38). He acknowledges in advance that this proposal will be met by ostensibly "*worldly-*

wise statesmen” with smugness (Kant [1795] 1983, 107), and that they would deride and dismiss his political views as “mere theory.” The “practical politician” would mock the human duty towards peace, and assert instead the “right” of the strong to make the weak obey them. “Nonetheless, . . . reason absolutely condemns war as a means of determining right and makes seeking the state of peace a matter of unmitigated duty. . . . A league of a special sort must therefore be established, one that we can call a *league of peace* . . . to end *all wars forever*” (Kant [1795] 1983, 116–17).

Hegel and Marx further developed the logic and strategy that undergirds today’s commonwealth aspirations. Hegel taught that history is a way of learning, and he raised the contemporary philosophical issue of why humanity’s social and intellectual life is still controlled by the powerful few rather than by the multitude. Hegel argued the social evolution of reason from lower to higher which would absorb and complete the limited and alienated products of an earlier form of culture and education, attaining thereby an advanced level of intelligence, art, and civilization. Hegel’s theory proposed that dis-alienation had to be the *work* of the alienated elements themselves, educationally and politically. It remained for Marx’s *labor theory of history* to buttress Hegel on alienation and to call attention to the appropriative and expropriative economic and political processes of the past and those which we continue to confront today in advanced capitalist modes, as well as the re-appropriation challenges of the global workforce. The tenth Feuerbach thesis tells us: “The standpoint of the old materialism is civil society; the standpoint of the new is human society, or social humanity.”

My sketch here of some of the features of the world’s practical wisdom traditions is consistent with Marx’s philosophical materialism: “The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness” (Marx [1859] 2009, 11). As we have seen, Marcuse emphasized that practical social problems gave rise dialectically to ideas subversive to the established reality. The source may be said to be within us insofar as *social customs of empathy and solidarity* find *instinctual* expression in the life-preserving force of Eros, longing for the pacification of the struggle for existence. The primatologist Frans de Waal (2013, 2009, 2006) has demonstrated convincingly how morality evolved, and has argued the emergence of an instinctual sense of empathy in certain primates and humans: “distress at the sight of another’s pain is an impulse over which we exert little or no control; it grabs us instantaneously, like a reflex, with no time to weigh the pros and cons” (2006, 51). Empathy figures in Marcuse’s final comments to Habermas just before he died, also pointing to a trans-historical source for moral values: “You see, now I know the foundation of

our basic ethical judgments— compassion [Mitleid], our sensitivity for [Gefühl für] the suffering of others” (Marcuse in Habermas 1981, 335).

Che Guevara’s famous statement on the ethos of Platonic love in the socialist revolutionary vanguard is also worth recollecting here:

This vanguard was the catalyzing agent that created the subjective conditions necessary for victory. . . . Every one of the fighters of the Sierra Maestra who reached an upper rank in the revolutionary forces has a record of outstanding deeds to his credit. They attained their rank on this basis . . . they competed for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty. . . . At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must make an ideal of this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible. . . . In these circumstances one must have a big dose of humanity, a big dose of a sense of justice and truth in order not to fall into dogmatic extremes, into cold scholasticism, into an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.⁶

Of course Guevara understood that revolutionaries need and have friends, wives, families whom they love in the usual sense, and that it is *from* these relationships that a revolutionary love is forged.

Multiple modes of moral reasoning contend with socialist humanism and the labor theory of ethics. The latter, as humanism, negates divine command theory, yet absorbs and preserves character-based and duty-based approaches, as well as the social utilitarianism of Mill. The personal utility calculus of Bentham is regarded by Marx as a form of moral egoism consistent only with bourgeois philistinism, as was the theory that even private economic evils can contribute—through the magic of the market—to the public good. Max Stirner, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Ayn Rand fall into similar categories of egoist illegitimacy.

Cognizant of the prevalence of malevolence and cruelty, conquest, unjust imprisonment, torture, starvation, that have continually destroyed and damaged human lives and the human promise throughout history, the *socialist humanist vision* of an egalitarian and partnership society (like that of Marcuse and Marx) with an economic foundation informed by ethics, must also be defended against the usual rejection of this view as impossibly utopian, at best good in theory, but of no practical political-economic value.

The dialectic of enlightenment as elaborated by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno ([1944] 1972) profoundly undermined philosophical and political confidence in the trans-historical truths of high German art.

Adorno, as is well known, questioned the very possibility of poetry after Auschwitz. This is quite possibly what led Marcuse to endorse in 1967 Thomas Mann's call for the revocation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which incorporated Schiller's "Ode to Joy" ["Alle Menschen werden Brüder"—"All human beings are becoming brothers"—CR]. Marcuse found this sublime art work to be an illusion that justified the "no longer justifiable" (Marcuse [1967] 1973c, 66; Reitz 2000, 202). Are the values preserved in a humanist ethics also "bright shining lies," at best only abstract criteria of judgment, trans-historically insightful perhaps, yet impotent in terms of the formation of moral and political praxis? Must the categorical imperative and golden rule also be revoked? Or in some manner can they be considered to retain a significance on a par with the dignified, if tragically conflicted, view of humanity and world found in much profound and great art? On the enduring value of Beethoven's Ninth see Peter Schütt's poem, "Victory Fanfare."

Victory Fanfare

by Peter Schütt

After the Wehrmacht
had bombarded with shells
the heart of Leningrad
for many weeks,
the besiegers were certain
that in the city all life was extinct.

Then they heard
in the first pause of fire,
over loudspeakers
Beethoven's Ninth Symphony
coming up from the cellars.

The soldiers,
those who knew this music,
perceived, we will never
conquer Leningrad.
The generals forbade
Beethoven concerts
as "defeatist."

Marx's dialectics teaches us that groups can and do have contradictory material interests. Sometimes these are completely antagonistic, and the context will not allow a resolution of the conflict. Antagonism is certainly not a

necessary feature of societies that are internally differentiated. How to live in society in ways that are just and sustainable is not self-evident, and this has been a trans-historical and critical challenge to human cultures.

Zvi Tauber correctly argues Marcuse's *ultimate* assessment of the rationality and value of art in his essay in this volume above. In Marcuse's final book, *The Aesthetic Dimension*, he concluded that great works, even given their apparently illusory qualities, were always and permanently "a manifestation of the struggle for liberation." Likewise, I argue here the enduring value of those particular aspects of the world's traditions in moral philosophy, i.e., those consistent with the labor theory of ethics and socialist humanism, as trans-historical, material and intellectual warrants for humanity's as yet unfinished project of liberation and actualization. Marcuse, even during his most militant middle period (in 1968) believed that liberal arts students could discern radical principles and ideas from their traditional studies:

One of the essential characteristics of the student movement is that the students apply to reality what has been taught them in the abstract through the work of the masters who have developed the great values of Western civilization. For example the primacy of natural law over established law, the inalienable right to resist tyranny and all illegitimate authority. . . . They simply cannot comprehend why these great principles should remain on the level of ideas instead of being put into practice and this is exactly what they are doing. (Marcuse [1968] 2005b, 101)

Of course, critical theory as such still needs to be taught to consolidate the gains of a liberal arts and sciences educational philosophy and raise them to their highest levels. The labor theory of ethics grounds its commonwealth criteria of judgment in the real and enduring material possibilities that encompass all of our engagement and action (with a nod to Jodi Dean's notion of the communist horizon, presented below). Over against the misanthropic and cynical conservatism that asserts inborn human aggression, the right of the stronger to economic exploitation and imperial manifest destiny, etc., Marcuse and Marx saw philosophical humanism *not* as politically powerless, but on the contrary: *practical* struggles for human dignity, respect, and empowerment have led to significant intercultural learning and social progress. The overarching aim of a humanist morality, in my view, is to offer an apt contribution to the project of unalienated human liberation and preservation; from the facts of crisis and suffering to discern their causes, eliminate their sources, alleviate the suffering, and stabilize a long term resolution—in order to establish human dignity and a commonwealth culture as the radical goals of the global socialist rising of, by, and for sensuous living labor.

Marcuse's 1965 essay "Socialist Humanism?" argued that the prospects of a socialist humanist politics needed to be investigated anew. He criticized the ostensible humanism of the then-U.S.S.R., but not as this was usually

done, i.e., rejecting it because its policies were implemented through violence and duress. Marcuse emphasized how the American and European imperialists likewise used their war machines to advocate human rights in foreign places, while on the home front they simultaneously reduced and restricted these rights. In his estimation, Marxism stresses correctly that humanism can only be realized through the expropriation of the expropriators, the elimination of commodity exchange, the reduction of the work week, the transformation of the labor process itself, and the dismantling of the military industrial complex. Humanism can *begin*, however, Marcuse says, within the existing capitalist society itself if it becomes a vital need of human beings who stand ready to liberate humanity and revolutionize human relationships. This need must then come to direct economic and political praxis as a component of material culture.

In 1962, Marcuse similarly confronted a core humanist conundrum:

Today the words “humanity” and “humanism” cause us some perplexity. Clearly something about them has not worked. It seems as though these ideas, these concepts, are of only antiquarian value, that humanism and humanity belong only to history. But what does that mean: that they belong only to history? If something happened just thirty years ago, that is history, and yet it conditions the present and will also affect our future. What we have learned during these thirty years that we had not earlier known, is this: *what human beings can be made to do. They can be made into inhuman beings.* (Marcuse in this volume’s Appendix)

In a debate with Sartre on the nature of humanism, historical materialism, and philosophy Marcuse emphasized Marx’s proposition that:

man, in his concrete historical existence, is not (yet) the realization of the *genus* man. This proposition states the fact that the historical forms of society have crippled the development of the general human faculties, of the *humanitas*. The concept of the *genus* man is thus at the same time the concept of the abstract-universal and of the *ideal* man— but it is *not* the concept of the “*réalité humaine*.” . . . For Marx, the conception of the “*réalité humaine*” is the critique of political economy and the theory of socialist revolution. (Marcuse 1966, 171)

For Marcuse “Marxism must risk defining freedom in such a way that people become conscious of and recognize it as something that is nowhere already in existence. And precisely because the so-called utopian possibilities are not at all utopian but rather the determinate socio-historical negation of what exists, a very real and very pragmatic opposition is required of us” (Marcuse 1970b, 69). A materialist interpretation of the humanist tradition demonstrates how labor-based opposition today can also express the “social force of a new general interest” (Marcuse 1970a, 90).

Marx also explains that until we abolish capitalism we will not enter “human history.” I would add that the de-mythologized, sociological strengths of the “*genus man*”—the labor-fairness in the marrow of humanity’s ethical criteria—continue to confront contemporary social realities as indictment and challenge.

Today’s level of social conflict and limitation makes a shift in intellectual and political growth necessary. The ethic of intercultural solidarity today is necessary if the human species is to go on living. The labor movement must be able to explain itself and the necessity of socialism and humanism. We are at the edge of an ethical as well as political-economic cliff. This is a matter of our very survival, as attested to by many writers but perhaps most vividly by Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco in *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt*: “Corporate capitalism will, quite literally, kill us, as it has killed Native Americans, African Americans trapped in our internal colonies, in the inner cities, those left behind in the devastated coal fields, and those who live as serf in our nation’s produce fields” (2012, xii). Today our options are 1) more of what we have: what Stephen Spartan in Chapter 7 of this volume called *a crisis the reproduction of the mode of privilege*—predatory over-appropriation, hedonism, sadism, predatory expropriation of labor, generalized anxiety, destruction, and self-destruction; or 2) an uprooting the traditional mode of privilege through a revolutionary process with the development of a *new mode of governance*. A united front effort toward a partnership community in which a socialist economic structure can sustain and reproduce justice in labor and life with egalitarian mores, norms, and values on the foundation of a new synthesis. *A latent material force*, this latter alternative is the *commonwealth cause*.

My thesis is that *intercultural labor force humanism* is necessary and feasible: it is the gravitational center holding social life together despite flare ups and explosions caused by the massive forces of careening corporate capitalism. Liberal capitalist voices will ultimately accede to the Right and counterrevolution, in some version of the first alternative. The labor force can rely *only* upon itself and the world’s commonwealth traditions to mobilize its fullest revolutionary power. *Labor’s humanism in this sense defines not only an emancipatory ethos, but the type of economic, social, and political structure that is needed for justice and peace to provide human sustainability*.

Marcuse’s socialist humanism, as I understand it, thus absorbs and resolves the recent debate between Honneth and Fraser regarding their divergent multicultural recommendations: the former suggesting values education to recognition and respect, the latter liberal approaches to redistribution. Socialist humanism, in contrast, connects issues of diversity, equality, and empowerment with labor as the key power base. The workforce is a resource with programmatic power. It is the creative force in the economy. Everything

depends on labor. Labor occurs in social relationships; it is a communal project of social beings to meet human needs and promote human flourishing. Because social labor is the source of social wealth, only the labor force, as a group, has a legitimate right to the ownership of this wealth. It also has the power to reclaim it and to rehumanize our very mode of being. Let me conclude with Marcuse's own definition of Marxist socialist humanism: "In the Marxian conception, socialism is humanism in as much as it organizes the social division of labor, the 'realm of necessity' so as to enable men to satisfy their social and individual needs without exploitation and with a minimum of toil and sacrifice" (Marcuse 1965, 98).

COMMONWEALTH, RISING?

Marx and Engels made clear in *The Communist Manifesto* "[t]he theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes" (Marx and Engels [1848] 1976, 498). The militant antiglobalization action in Seattle 1999 against corporate capitalism, the World Trade Organization, and other international financial institutions, united "teamsters and turtles," activist elements of organized labor in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world with environmentalist organizations, in a massive confrontation with the para-military police power that protected the representatives of global capital as they consolidated their payroll-slashing through outsourcing and "race to the bottom" investment strategies. In 2001, a similar confrontation occurred in Genoa, Italy. This was one of the most enormous demonstrations against global finance capital Europe had seen in years. The 2011 and 2012 anti-austerity uprisings in Athens, Rome, Madrid, and elsewhere were equally spectacular and militant. So too the massive student protests against tuition increases in Montreal, Quebec, during March, May, and August 2012. These struggles echo the worker-student protests in Paris 1968, the rise at that time of Eurocommunism (more on this below), and the new forms of political-economic thinking emergent from the now regular meetings of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and elsewhere.

Owner elites and the state have a common interest in the reproduction of the mode of surplus because both are reproduced by surplus product. But this common necessity to command surplus product may under certain circumstances generate tensions between elites and the state. Stephen Spartan in Chapter 7 above distinguished between surplus product needed to reproduce elites and surplus product required to reproduce the state. The *mode of privilege* (ownership relations) was therefore distinguished from the *mode of*

governance (the state). The differentiation of mode of privilege and mode of governance is necessary because the reproduction imperatives of elite owners may be distinct from the reproduction imperatives of the state. When elites and/or states *over*-appropriate surplus product, the mode of surplus reproduction dominates at the expense of the mode of base reproduction. This can be the beginning of a contradiction of reproduction imperatives within the mode of surplus due to surplus over-appropriation. Both neoliberalism and neoconservatism can thus be seen as expressions of a fundamental contradiction between the mode of surplus reproduction and the mode of base reproduction within the capitalist social structure, not simply as stingy or greedy political programs of particular parties or factions of parties.

Radical authors today are coming to realize also that: “the only way forward is a new arrangement, based on ones that have better served societies since the dawn of civilization” (Pettifor 2012, 24). These “new” arrangements are derived from the commonwealth practices that prevailed for the longest period in human history in ancient African (and subsequently other, e.g., Minoan) partnership societies, and which persist in the contemporary labor theory of ethics as outlined here. Just one indication of this advancing perspective is that of British ecological economist, Brian Davey, who suggests as a new socialist starting point “the philosophy, culture, and political economic ideas of a diversity of indigenous communities and tribes in the Andean region” (Davey 2012). These peoples were modeling a “solidarity economy” blending ecology and socialism after a long history of colonial oppression, racism, and sexism. The contemporary combination of socialism and ecological policy is likewise seen by others (Kozloff 2008; Bateman 2012; Sitrin 2012) as offering further examples in Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, and elsewhere.

In my view, a commonwealth arrangement of the economy would hold and dispose of resources publicly, eliminate rent-seeking and the for-profit financial industry as modes of privilege, distribute incomes without reference to individual productivity according to need and as equally as feasible, substantially reduce hours of labor, and make possible, through socialist general education privileging no single culture or language, the well-rounded scientific and multicultural development of the young. Bertrand Russell proposes, only half sardonically, that labor is valuable not because work is intrinsically good, but because leisure is good. “A great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of *work*. . . . [T]he road to happiness and prosperity lies in the organized diminution of work” (Russell [1932] 1965, 227). Of course Russell is referring to alienated labor. Nonetheless, as Marx and Marcuse also stress, a great deal of leisure in each person’s life would be an irreplaceable resource for the free play of human energy and effort in one’s own artistic or avocational projects, and must be an essential

element of any new labor humanist or commonwealth arrangement. Artwork is work, as Zvi Tauber attests Marx himself emphasized.

Commonwealth combines unity with multiplicity. If we say the human species is a multicultural species because humans have lived in a variety of geographical settings in various historical circumstances, we mean to acknowledge that a diversity of cultures has emerged. Certain of these cultures, as with the Anglo-American imperium, have displaced and dominated others. Traditionally Anglo-conformist higher education in the U.S., with its entrenched and discriminatory politics of race, gender, and class, typified *monocultural* and exceptionalist assertions of superiority and concomitant internal hierarchies. Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* also subverted the claims of a similar kind of arrogant self-regard, demonstrating how Germany's ostensibly enlightened monoculture was historically compatible with genocidal chauvinism, predation, and war.

Marcuse's writing counterposed a critical and multidimensional philosophical perspective against the single-dimensional qualities and economic deformations of cultures that reproduce oppression and inequality. Through explicit attempts to overcome the dominant forms of monoculturalism and nationalistic exceptionalism, which only see differences as deficiencies, we can attain a deeper, more complete understanding and relationship to reality. In this sense, the reification and restriction of the consciousness of the labor force, identified as the central problematic or conundrum of Western Marxism since the writings of Lukács, preventing labor from comprehending its condition and acting to build beyond it, is receding in relevance in proportion to the advance of a more complete multicultural and *intercultural* understanding of the human condition. What have been recognized as the civilizing forces of our age: the labor movement, civil rights movement, women's rights movement, the student anti-war movement, the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) movement, and widespread ecological efforts, have educated the general population about alienation, oppression, power, and empowerment as they have engaged in creative struggles for egalitarian social change.

Marcuse saw this coming, and in his last essay on "The Reification of the Proletariat," wrote of a "counter-consciousness" emergent "among the dependent population (today about 90% of the total?), an awareness of the ever more blatant obsolescence of the established social division and organization of work" (Marcuse 1979, 21). This counter-consciousness included a consciousness of growing frustration, humiliation, and waste that is tending to become "a material force" (1979, 22). It was a new form of awareness that expressed itself in new modes of action:

not initiated by any specific class, but by a precarious and temporary "alliance" of groups among the dependent population. Such actions include the

“citizens initiatives” (e.g., the organized protest against nuclear energy installations, against capitalist urban renewal [as were occurring in the late ’70s in Germany –CR]), the fight against racism and sexism, the students’ protests, etc. At the same time, workers’ initiatives transcend the merely economic class struggle in the demands for the self-organization (autogestion [worker self-management, employee ownership—CR]) of work. (1979, 22)

Arguably, these movements have promoted social change within the existing social and economic structures. Marx and Marcuse had a more egalitarian and less alienating agenda than any of the single-issue reformist forces. And as Marcuse saw it, a new, more generalized, type of communism in Europe—“Eurocommunism”—was being made possible by this multidimensional anti-capitalist counter-consciousness. Insofar as it “negated the *reification* which veiled the real mechanism of domination Can there still be any mystification of who is governing and in whose interests, of what is the base of their power?” (1979, 23). The dominant European political tendencies at that time were tending to the right, but the development of Eurocommunism, which had much in common with the broadly activist socialist humanism of Marcuse, meant that the rightward drift was “meeting an enlarged opposition” (1979, 23).

According to Manuel Azcárate (1978), the International Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party during the late 1970s, “Eurocommunism is a cluster of new theories, new political and strategic ideas which have arisen among a number of Communist parties, and which seek to give a new answer to the problems thrown up in the crisis of our time.” He said it began with the Paris student uprisings of May–June 1968, which no longer looked to the U.S.S.R., nor solely to the labor force for leadership. Marcuse was, of course, also lecturing in Europe at that time and shared such views, which never abandoned the labor force as potential revolutionary subject: “In spite of everything that has been said, I still cannot imagine a revolution without the working class” (Marcuse [1968] 2005b, 106).

The Arab awakening of 2011 is one more sign that various groups no longer willing to endure minority status within their own countries may be able to establish revolutionary partnership organizations capable of challenging and replacing what have often been narrowly ethnic despotisms. Social change can occur quite suddenly, but a well thought-out revolutionary analysis and strategy is crucial for enduring success. According to Richard Seymour (2012, 57), “Tahrir Square was the beginnings of a commune.” Demonstrators took over a public space and set up a city within a city, collectively coping with challenges, and applying “techniques of cooperation, solidarity, self-government.” In addition, the Egyptian labor movement was striking for changes in authority and management, as the Tunisian labor movement had also. Seymour emphasizes,

Now, this isn't socialism. Socialists were a current in the revolution, but not a big one. The major currents were Nassarists, Islamists, and liberals. And there are all sorts of political struggles that have to continue—the horrible attacks on women in Tahrir Square on international women's day show that this fight has to occur during the revolution. Subsequently, the army leadership sought to consolidate a conservative ruling bloc with the assistance of the Muslim Brothers, who were an invaluable part of the revolutionary coalition, but always the most right-wing element of it. (Seymour 2012, 58)

The progressive, revolutionary elements within the “Arab Spring” have not succeeded in developing themselves into a pivotal force. The “new” governments are largely constituted of the “old” majorities, and are religious conservatives.

We have learned from the movements against racism and sexism in the United States that class relations do not wholly demarcate structures of dominator power. Racism, patriarchy, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination, disrespect, and inequality sorely inhibit our powers of social- and self-actualization. Forms of persecution are multiplying amidst growing global inequality. Reactionary forces reinforce bias of every sort in the hoary yet effective strategy of divide and conquer. While the general abolition of the wages-system is not absolutely *sufficient* to secure the conditions for each of us to become all that we are capable of being, *the alienation and exploitation of labor is the enabling material core that today requires dominant cultures to subjugate innocent minorities.*

I would like to urge Marcuse's ongoing relevance to contemporary political struggle in a final example. Zvi Tauber's (2012) research, recently published in *Telos*, examines a late 1971 face-to-face exchange between Herbert Marcuse and the then Israeli Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, offering a capsule description of Marcuse's policy suggestions for enhancing peace at that time and his disapproval of Israel's “peace refusal.” Three years prior to his visit, Marcuse, who supported the existence of the State of Israel and its absolute right to defend itself, had published his opposition not only to the Israeli government's policy after the Six-Day War, but also to one of the main Zionist ideological beliefs: that of the religious, or ultimate (biblical or other historical mystical) rights of the People of Israel to the Land of Israel. Marcuse said that “[t]he establishment of the State of Israel as a sovereign state may be regarded as injustice in the sense that the state was founded on foreign land by virtue of an international agreement without taking into real consideration the problems of the local population and what happened to it” (Marcuse in Tauber 2012, 179). Tauber mentions that during the brief time of Marcuse's 1971 visit, he met with labor and communist elements in Israel. The transcript of his conversation with Dayan includes Dayan's fairly arrogant and unapologetic admission that the State of Israel was established on Arab land:

The Minister of Defense: . . . We came here, and (a) we have cut the two parts of the Arabic world off from one another; and (b) we have taken from them an Arabic land and made it Jewish. . . .

Marcuse: Do you admit that? You are the first Israeli I have met here in the country who admits to that

The Minister of Defense: Of course I admit it. It's a fact. (Tauber 2012, 179)

Tauber indicates the essential correctness of Marcuse's perspective on this topic in his overall assessment. Marcuse's firm conviction about the legitimacy of "the continuation of the Israeli state" was expressed in an interview near the end of his life, yet this strong belief was also connected in the next breath to a "consideration of the conditions under which it was founded" and a suggestion that Palestinians who had been displaced should have a right to return and resettle in Israel (Marcuse [1977] 2005a, 181). The latter recommendation, Marcuse acknowledged, had been officially rejected by Israel given the immense difficulties that would have been involved. As Tauber sees it, Marcuse was actually for the two-state solution: "The national aspirations of the Palestinian people could be satisfied by the establishment of a national Palestinian state alongside Israel. Whether this state would be an independent entity, or federated with Israel or with Jordan, would be left to the self-determination of the Palestinian people, in a referendum held under supervision by the United Nations" (Marcuse in Tauber 2012, 182).

Marcuse's views on the Arab-Israeli conflict at that time are also extremely relevant today. Palestine and Israel are again at the center of international discussion, given the recent cessation of warfare in Gaza and the United Nations' vote on November 29, 2012, over the objections of the U.S. and Israel to recognize for the first time Palestine as a state.

Shortly before he died Marcuse posed the question of whether the ascendancy of a neo-fascist regime in the U.S.A. can be prevented. Among the reasons why he asked this was his conviction that since at least 1972 the U.S. had entered a period of preemptive counterrevolution. Certainly this tendency has only worsened after 9/11. Douglas Kellner (2003) elaborates this kind of conservative counterrevolution, as we noted above, by citing foreign and domestic policy initiatives of the second Bush administration which wished to make "the global war on terror" the defining struggle of the era. Kellner re-named this policy Terror War because the key developments of the global war on terror are comprised of basically totalitarian components: bellicose nationalism and aggressive militarism, under the rubrics of "crusade" against enemy jihadists. Combating the "axis of evil" legitimated "preemptive strikes" and "regime change," as well as domestic police state powers under the U.S.A. Patriot Act and the National Security Agency. Kellner demonstrates, further, that these policies have propelled the U.S. into being itself a

rogue state, a renewed imperialist power (counter to recent assertions of Hardt and Negri), and whose projection of military might continues to be oblivious of civilian casualties and war crimes.

Barack Obama was elected U.S. president in 2008 largely for his stance on military withdrawal from Iraq and his support for economic recovery from that year's financial meltdown. The dangerous demagoguery of Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage, etc., and the resurgent racism of the right wing Tea Party faction of the Republican party (documented and criticized by McLaren and Jerimillo 2007) sought to derail the re-election of this black, Democratic president. With the defeat of Republican presidential contender, Mitt Romney, and several prominent right wing extremist candidates, some liberals have concluded that Barack Obama's 2012 re-election marks the end of white supremacy as a viable political factor in the U.S. But the resurgent racism of the recent massive anti-Obama campaign has not gone away. A black president, while making a palpable difference in the way the world looks at the U.S. and the way some individuals, minority or otherwise, may entertain rising expectations, does not signify the elimination or transformation of the persistent institutional realities of racism and vast economic inequality here. Similarly, U.S. militarism continues unabated through each U.S. presidency, as does the class war against labor. In December 2012 the U.S. government completed its purchase of the "most expensive weapons program in history," 2,400 stealth jet fighters costing \$396 billion from Lockheed, the world's largest military supplier (*The New York Times*, December 1, 2012, p. B-1). Inasmuch as U.S. militarism continues under both Democratic and Republican administrations, it is systemic and impelled to continue to extend its efforts at domination world-wide. Incomes to those profiteering from military-industrial complex, like those profiteering from the financial sector, are enhanced as a mode of privilege at the expense of social needs oriented programs.

Barack Obama's "kill lists"⁷ target foreign enemies for drone strikes, though his administration has denied they might also target U.S. citizens domestically. "Murder as Policy" has been the norm wherever the U.S. empire has sought to promote and protect its business interests, a key element in engineering regime change in Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), El Salvador (1979), Chile (1973), even against allies considered ineffective like the Diems (1963) in South Vietnam. As Douglas Dowd and John Marciano have stressed in this volume, empire and white supremacy are a "way of life" in the U.S.A.

Marcuse advises: "Today radical opposition can be considered only in a global framework" (Marcuse 1970a, 83). "All the material and intellectual forces which could be put to work for the realization of a free society are at hand. That they are not used for that purpose is to be attributed to the total

mobilization of the existing society against its own potential for liberation” (Marcuse 1970b, 64).

A fateful crisis of the global capitalist system is upon us. So too is a crucial opportunity for a new political beginning. The goal of building a universal human community on the foundation of universal human rights cannot be accomplished by a renewed call for education to emancipatory consciousness alone. The fundamental role of the labor process in the sustenance of the human community must be acknowledged, not only how this has been dehumanized and degraded, but also its ultimately irrepressible power to build the commonwealth. The 1 percent’s enormous accumulation of private property has not led to the self-actualization of the human species or its individual constituents, as the neoliberal business utopians assert, but to the continuation of war and poverty, and to the delusions of grandeur and self-destruction on the part of our current Masters of the Universe on Wall Street. The radical goal of socialism is to reclaim our common humanity through public work for the public good. Sensuous living labor, through its own agency and revolutionary humanism, has within its power the transformation of the social wealth production process into the production of our *common wealth*.

NOTES

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1. Discussions with Zvi Tauber and Stephen Spartan have been especially helpful in articulating the ongoing political philosophical significance of Herbert Marcuse.

2. Marcuse’s *Soviet Marxism* makes it clear that neither socialization nor nationalization of productive property, in and of itself, will preclude alienation (Reitz, 2000, 165). Nonetheless it is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition and starting point.

3. “Public work” is a concept developed by Harry C. Boyte and Nancy N. Kari (1996) which I extend in a socialist manner. Public work aims at the public interest and the public good, work’s larger civic purposes, not private accumulation. It is oriented toward meeting human needs, rather than market or commercial requirements. It is work become as Marx envisioned it: life’s prime want.

4. Where Marcuse (1969, 7–8) earlier wrote of the “kept intellectuals” whose consciousness was quite fully assimilated/integrated within the single-dimensional system ideology of advanced capitalism, and where Antonio Gramsci wrote of “hegemonic intellectuals,” Bahro held that even state functionaries in the U.S.S.R. or Eastern Bloc often did not fully identify with the apparatus of government or its political imperatives. There, system-thinking was easily undermined when social contradictions became politically heightened, and a surplus consciousness (überschüssiges Bewußtsein, literally “overflow” of consciousness) widely emerged (Bahro 1977a, 381). During the final stages of his own intellectual development, Marcuse believed Bahro’s insight was immensely significant. Douglas Kellner concludes: “In effect, Bahro and Marcuse are arguing that critical consciousness and emancipatory needs are being developed by the contradictions in the social conditions of advanced industrial society—capitalist and state socialist” (Kellner 1984, 308–309).

5. Immanuel Kant, *Posthumous papers*, cited in Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Volume X, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 550.
6. Che Guevara, "Man and Socialism Speech (1965)" retrieved February 20, 2013 from <http://www.hey-che.com/man-socialism-speech-1965/>.
7. Jo Becker and Scott Shane, "Secret 'Kill List' Proves a Test of Obama's Principles and Will," *The New York Times*, May 29, 2012, p. A-1.

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Chapter Thirteen

Diversity, Equality, Empowerment in Politics and Education

Peter McLaren

Charles Reitz

In the current period of intensifying inequalities and openly racist and sexist politicians and personalities in the mass media, Marcuse's (1965) critique of "pure tolerance" has immense relevance (McLaren and Jarimillo 2007, 51–52). The concept of tolerance, once used in religious and political struggles by marginalized and oppressed groups seeking acceptance by the mainstream society, is now used by the rich and powerful, the keepers of the system and protectors of legalized violence and exploitation, as a tool to legitimate their oppressive views. As Marcuse describes the circumstance,

the conditions of "tolerance" are loaded . . . the active, official tolerance granted to the Right as well as to the Left, to movements of aggression as well as to movements of peace, to the party of hate as well as humanity. I call this non-partisan tolerance "abstract" or "pure" inasmuch as it refrains from taking sides—but in doing so it actually protects the already established machinery of discrimination. (Marcuse 1965, 84–85)

Marcuse's partisanship is clear: "The small and powerless minorities which struggle against the false consciousness and its beneficiaries must be helped: their continued existence is more important than the preservation of abused rights and liberties which grant constitutional powers to those who oppress these minorities" (1965, 110). Marcuse defended the idea of a harassment-free environment in the public sphere and specifically on the nation's campuses.

Critical theory needs properly to respond to the multiple forms of oppression and social struggles in our society. Many real crimes by the Right are tolerated in practice, such as systematic police brutality, supplying arms and training to governments and armed groups around the world that commit torture, political killings and other human rights abuses, depriving millions of people of comprehensive health care, treating asylum seekers as criminals, implementing the death penalty in a racially biased manner, etc. (Amnesty International 1998). In the wake of the 2011 mass shootings by avowed racist Anders Behring Breivik killing seventy-seven people in Norway we see once again the dangers of the pure tolerance of abusive speech.

Marcuse's analysis of repressive desublimation, and repressive education also figure prominently in the current Marcuse Renaissance. Marcuse warned against a type of "happy" and false consciousness—where popular entertainment and consumerist pleasures deliver a superficial sense of satisfaction that may devolve into the grotesque. The unrestrained use of sex and violence by the corporate mass media and other large-scale commercial interests accomplishes a broadened manipulation and control in the interest of capital accumulation, and substitutes reactionary emotional release in place of rebellion. The personality remains totally absorbed in the system of commodity production. Gun violence in the U.S. today (from Columbine to Sandy Hook) should be understood in this context.

Douglas Kellner (2013) shows how a reconstruction of masculinity and different models of male socialization are necessary to seriously address the problem of mass shootings and social violence in the contemporary U.S. deeply influenced by violent media culture. He is clear that

while media images of violence and specific books, films, TV shows, video and computer games, and other artifacts of media culture may provide scripts for violent masculinity that young men act out, it is the broader culture of militarism, gun culture, violent sports, ultraviolent video and computer games, subcultures of bullying and violence, and the rewarding of ultramascularity in the corporate and political worlds that are major factors in constructing hegemonic violent masculinities. . . . Crises in masculinity are grounded in the deterioration of socio-economic possibilities for young men and are inflamed by economic troubles. In a time of neo-liberal capitalist economic crisis young men without a positive economic future and prospects for good jobs turn to guns for empowerment. Their rage is intensified by gun culture and declining economic prospects. Gun carnage is also encouraged in part by media that repeatedly illustrate violence as a way of responding to problems. Explosions of male rage and rampage are also embedded in the escalation of war and militarism in the United States from the long nightmare of Vietnam through the military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. (Kellner 2013).

Racial and other kinds of oppression (including crusading military invasions in order to "extend democracy") have significant political value in

service to the established system of repression. The social mechanisms of repressive desublimation and repressive tolerance serve to integrate the labor force into the concrete system of commodity production. Marcuse emphasized uprooting the mechanisms generative of ongoing social problems. For him this meant the critique of commodity production and concentrated private accumulation at workforce expense, i.e., the pursuit of the radical goals of socialism and commonwealth.

Marcuse's theory contends that advanced capitalism is obsessed with efficiency, standardization, mechanization, and specialization, and that this fetish involves aspects of domination that impede real education and preclude the development of real awareness of ourselves and our world. Alienation is seen as in part the result of a mis-education or half-education that reproduces the unequal capitalist social division of labor. Marcuse anticipated the counterrevolutionary tendencies now raging in the neoconservative culture wars to reinsinuate an elitist, Eurocentric program for the liberal arts in U.S. general education. Marcuse nonetheless saw within the classical liberal arts philosophy critical impulses toward multiculturalism, social history, and critical social theory. Educational activity can and must become the *negation* of exploitation, inequality, alienation. Marcuse stressed that traditional liberal arts education must be renewed with an aesthetic sensibility and multicultural empathy that can help us become actively engaged for social justice. There needs to be a key unity in education of critical thought and radical action; radically changed systems of schooling must come to evoke the visceral need for fairness and equality on questions of gender, race, and class. Revolutionary critical educators and students need to continue to take risks and struggle to infuse the curriculum with analysis of the "critical, radical movements and theories in history, literature, philosophy" (Marcuse [1968] 2009a, 37). The curriculum must afford a world-historical, international, and multicultural perspective that examines the pivotal social struggles that have led to the emergence of various standards of criticism in ethics, in logic, in the worlds of art, physical science, production, and technology. These standards constitute the *criteria* of judgment which intelligence requires, and critical education, thus grounded in the rational kernel of the Hegelian educational philosophy, emphasizing critical theorizing, must necessarily also have an emancipatory *action* component (Reitz 2002). Learning occurs in communities that help one another to apprehend the dialectic of the historical and material world and the changing social condition of humanity within it. Learning from real world struggles aims at an understanding of the principles of action required for human beings, as sensuous living labor, to grasp theoretically, and possess politically, the economic processes that today divest us from our own creative work and communal power.

THE HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCE, AND
REVOLUTIONARY PRAXIS

While some aspects of Marcuse's social and political philosophy have become quite widely known in the U.S., his philosophy of education has not. This circumstance is being countered through recent contributions by Douglas Kellner, Tyson E. Lewis, and Clayton Pierce in their book *On Marcuse: Critique, Liberation, and Reschooling in the Radical Pedagogy of Herbert Marcuse* (2009), and in an edited collection *Marcuse's Challenge to Education* (Kellner, Cho, Lewis, and Pierce 2009). Likewise I have made contributions of my own (Reitz 2000, 2009a, 2009b). Marcuse by the late 1960s had famously become a proponent of an activist politics against capitalism, war, and imperialism. A core element of his overall theory and practice was also the profound challenge he asserted against the systems of schooling and higher learning in the U.S. He specifically opposed the displacement of the humanities in the 1960s by Clark Kerr's (1963) "multiversity" vision of higher education: one in which science and technology in service to the needs of commerce, industry, and the military was the primary mission. As head of the University of California, Kerr was a major liberal spokesperson who thereafter became chairperson of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. Kerr's ideological and institutional innovations represented one of the most articulate and authoritative administrative points of view in the intense educational philosophical debates that occurred on this nation's campuses during the late 1960s, early 1970s. Institutionalized during the 1960s among other places at Columbia, Harvard, Berkeley, and at the State Universities of Wisconsin and New York, Kerr's philosophy of the extended, service university has now been implemented almost everywhere in higher education. In the post-Sputnik, early-Vietnam era, critics of the multiversity pointed out that the phenomenal growth of these conglomerate higher education systems was heavily subsidized by grants from the federal government and corporations for research into areas such as aerospace, intelligence, weapons. A massive expansion of Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs also occurred. These extra-academic interests characteristically influenced higher educational policy giving priority to the needs of the business and military establishments. Many objected also to the dehumanization displayed in the multiversity's new and increasing commitment to behavioral objectives in teaching and learning, and performance-based criteria for intellectual competence, as well as the growing predominance of managerial language and thinking in the organization of higher education.

Marcuse on the other hand, of course, acquired a reputation in the U.S. and in Europe as the philosopher of the student protest movement and as a spokesperson for the radical analysis of (and resistance to) the foreign and domestic policies of the U.S. government and its allies in Europe and South-



Figure 13.1. “College ROTC: Tactical Unit” by Jerome Heckmann. Art reproduced with permission of Jerome Heckmann.

east Asia. His continuing merit and appeal stems to an important degree from this work on the problems of knowledge and the political impacts of education. His critique of the prevailing mode of enculturation in the United States as education *to alienation* and to single-dimensionality is immensely relevant today. So, too, his emphasis on the emancipatory and *disalienating potential of the humanities and social theory* which are thought able to recall the species-essence of the human race from philosophical oblivion. Alienation, in his estimation, is the result of *training people to forget* their authentic human nature—its essential internal turmoil and stress—due not only to conflicts between Eros and Thanatos, but also due to artificial, unnecessary, “surplus” restraints upon our social potential and empathic proclivities as

sensuous living labor. Conditioned to a repressive commodification of needs, making a living becomes more important than making a life. During his militant middle period, Marcuse, like Schiller, urges education and art as *countermovements to alienation*: an *aesthetic rationality* is thought to transcend the prevailing logic of performance and achievement in the one-dimensional society and to teach radical action towards justice and human fulfillment. He even sees a possible reconciliation of the humanistic and technological perspectives via the hypothesis that *art may become a social and productive force* (Marcuse 1969a, 26) for material improvement, reconstructing the economy in accordance with aesthetic goals and thus reducing alienation in the future.

Marcuse thus philosophized about education under conditions of oppression and alienation, and this concern and activity was central to his entire intellectual effort. His work communicates the vibrancy of his German and Hellenic intellectual sources and the essential connection of education to the attainment of the social potential of the human race is an integral part of his general theoretical discourse.

Allan Bloom famously sought to “rescue” the humanities from the perils of political protest and value relativism in *The Closing of the American Mind* during the late 1980s. While higher education in the humanities is traditionally thought of as pursuing universally human aims and goals, Bloom was unwilling to admit that a cultural politics of class, a cultural politics of race, and a cultural politics of gender *had* set very definite constraints upon the actualization of the humane concerns of a liberal arts education. Instead, Bloom’s overblown “patriotism” and provincialism attributed a decline of the humanities and U.S. culture in general to the popularization of German philosophy in the United States since the 1960s, especially the ideas of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Marcuse, which were regarded as nihilistic and demoralizing. Bloom argued that we had imported “a clothing of German fabrication for our souls, which . . . cast doubt upon the Americanization of the world on which we had embarked” (Bloom 1987, 152). In a typically facile remark, Bloom said of Marcuse: “He ended up here writing trashy culture criticism with a heavy sex interest” (Bloom 1987, 226). No hint from him that one of Marcuse’s prime contributions to the critical analysis of American popular culture was his notion of “repressive desublimation”—how the unrestrained use of sex and violence by the corporate mass media and other large scale commercial interests accomplished social manipulation and control in the interest of capital accumulation (see also Kellner 2012). Or that Marcuse (in some ways very much like Bloom) valued high art and the humanities precisely because they teach the *sublimation* of the powerful urge for pleasure which in other contexts threatens destruction. Marcuse was no sheer advocate of a *Bildungshumanismus*. He had been more than dubious of the traditionally conservative and politically apologetic (or “affirmative”)

quality of high German art and education when writing his 1937 *Zeitschrift* piece, "On the Affirmative Character of Culture." He did believe, however, that the traditional liberal arts philosophy also had a critical dimension. The liberal arts and humanities were not seen simply to transmit or to preserve the dominant culture. They made possible the very development of critical thinking and human intelligence itself. Since the venerable liberal arts tradition has been historically (and inseparably) tied to a realistic and normative concept of *eidōs* (ideas as unseen realities known only in the "mind's eye") and essence (as per Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel), we should not be surprised to find some modification of classical realism (and *not the value relativism* the conservative culture warriors claim) in Marcuse's aesthetics and humanist ontology of labor. Indeed, Chapter 8 of *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) argues the historical reality of universals, and his third chapter highlights the importance of the aesthetic Form as the dimension where both reality and truth can be disclosed. Marcuse also generally shares with Plato and Schiller the philosophical conviction that the most meaningful and beautiful works of art are also a sound foundation for an education to political justice.

I contend that Marcuse has contributed substantially to a deprovincialization of what he saw as the unidimensional technocratic imperative in post-war U.S. culture. "Deprovincialization" is a concept I borrow from Egon Schwarz's (1992) autobiography about exile also to the Americas during the Nazi period. With regard to the life and theory of Marcuse, I take deprovincialization to mean the general replacement of an essentially single-dimensional view of the world by an analysis of culture and philosophy that is profoundly multi-dimensional. Marcuse understood as *single-dimensional*, a cultural or philosophical perspective that is oblivious to the problematic nature of prevailing social and economic relations. Sometimes he speaks of one-dimensionality as the triumph of "happy consciousness" in this regard, grounded in the suffocation and repression of life's internal inconsistencies and contradictions. Marcuse proposes that a genuine philosophy is aware of itself as needing to be more sensitive to questions of complex causality and more skeptical of simplistic visions of the good life or good society. Philosophy must confront "the power of positive thinking" *which he holds to be destructive of philosophy* with "the power of negative thinking" which illumines "the facts" in terms of the *real possibilities* which the facts *deny*. Philosophical reflection as he sees it is thus essentially always multi-dimensional, dialectical, and generative of fuller cultural freedom.

In my estimation, Marcuse's efforts to deprovincialize U.S. culture have actually led to a *recovery of philosophy* in the post-1960s United States academic context, especially among a new generation of scholars in the humanities and social sciences who are more conscious than ever of issues arising from conflicts involved in the context of our political, moral, and academic culture. After World War II, logical positivism had attained a near

monopoly in U.S. graduate schools of philosophy and generally prevailed as the underlying scholarly methodology within the undergraduate curricula as well. European approaches such as phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, and critical theory tended to be severely marginalized, especially at the most prestigious private and the largest state universities. Although Marcuse died in 1979, I cannot believe that the philosophical upheavals which developed throughout the 1980s in the American Philosophical Association, for example, splitting “analysts” and “pluralists” were not substantially due to his influence. My view is that the APA’s own kind of *Positiviststreit* could not have occurred apart from Herbert Marcuse’s immense impact in *One-Dimensional Man*. This was republished in 1991 with a new introduction by Douglas Kellner: further testimony to its ongoing pertinence to continuing controversies. See also Marcuse’s (1969b) APA address “The Relevance of Reality,” which vividly demonstrates his radical and heretical stance vis à vis U.S. academic philosophy. Marcuse called for a rethinking of the relevance of reality in four key areas of philosophy: 1) linguistic analysis, emphasizing a new, more *political* linguistics; 2) aesthetics, emphasizing the nexus of artwork and *society*; 3) epistemology, moving towards a *historical* understanding of transcendent knowledge; and 4) the history of philosophy itself, emphasizing the internal relationships *linking theory of education to the theory of politics since Plato*: “authentic democracy presupposes equality in the ways, means, and time necessary for acquiring the highest level of knowledge” (Marcuse 1969b).

Marcuse advised critical educators and students to continue to take risks and struggle to infuse the curriculum with analysis of the “critical, radical movements and theories in history, literature, philosophy” (Marcuse [1968] 2009a, 37). He believed that education *could* act against alienation and oppression. Marcuse connected proto-revolutionary, transitional goals, to goals that envisaged a more encompassing view of liberation and human flourishing via the revolutionary passage from wages and salaries—to what I call commonwork for the commonwealth. Likewise, the general framework of his critical social theory dialectically transformed (through negation, preservation, and elevation) a central assumption of classical European philosophy: higher education may cultivate the political desire to help us accomplish our humanization. Philosophy, art, and social theory (i.e., the humanities and social and political history) can, by virtue of their admittedly elitist critical distance, oppose an oppressive status quo and furnish an intangible, yet concrete, revolutionary *telos* by which to guide personal growth and emancipatory social practice. Marcuse is attracted to the humanities, social philosophy, and political theory because their subject matter and methodology are thought to focus upon questions of the meaning of human experience, rather than on the sheer description of conditions (this latter procedure being rejected as the non-philosophical approach of behaviorism and empiricism).

He regards classical learning by means of discourse and reflection on history, philosophy, literature, drama, music, painting, sculpture, etc., as liberating insofar as this is thought to propel humanity beyond the “first dimension” (the realm of conformity to what is) to the multidimensional world of significance and meaning that allows us to re-create life in accordance with the highest potentials of human beings.

The social sciences and liberal arts help us reclaim our common humanity. Yet, as Herbert Marcuse’s stepson, Osha Neumann correctly observes: “Our myriad histories and endlessly varied bodies are the medium through which, and only through which, our common humanity emerges. This common humanity exists inextricably bonded to our diversity” (Neumann 2008, 197). For Marcuse the curriculum must afford a world-historical, international, and multicultural perspective that examines the pivotal social struggles that have led to the emergence of various standards of criticism in ethics, in logic, in the worlds of art, physical science, production, technology, and politics. These standards constitute the historical and material (i.e., not merely abstract) philosophical *criteria* of judgment (ideas) which intelligent action requires.

REVOLUTIONARY MULTICULTURALISM: SOCIAL ACTION FOR JUSTICE

Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo have recently written *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Towards a New Humanism* (2007) during this period of the global crisis of capitalism. Where Marcuse speaks of counter-revolution, they speak of “the rising tide of belligerence” and “the emblematic war on the poor” (2007, 3–21), calling for a world economic system based on socialist equality and democracy, without which there can be no peace and no survival. Furthermore, McLaren (2000, 1997) calls for the pedagogy of revolution and *revolutionary multiculturalism*—that is, teaching in a critical manner that refuses to replicate class exploitation, racism, gender inequality, empire, and war.

Reconfiguring educational institutions overall in the direction of *multicultural organizational transformation* involves the struggle under current conditions for multicultural changes in curriculum (including also social action components), teaching methodology, school climate (emphasizing support for student academic success and social justice activities), as well as into effective diversity initiatives in staffing, sourcing, supervision, and governance. All of this must be infused into the educational system. The movement and struggle for multicultural organizational transformation recognizes that entrenched patterns of *institutional* racism and discrimination undergird attitudes of *interpersonal* racism. Race and racism must be brought to the fore-

front of critical educational theory, and we need to heed ethnic minority scholars (Calderón 2009, 159–80). Prejudice and bigotry are not simply a result of an individual’s attitude of disrespect or disregard (or *Anerkennungsvergessenheit* [being unmindful of the dignity of others] Honneth 2005, 62–77). Reductions in mindless bigotry and/or interpersonal expressions of bias are best facilitated through the reduction and elimination of *institutional* inequalities in the economy, law, and education, etc. Thus, it is insufficient for multicultural education reform merely to “celebrate diversity!” Necessary as that is, it is also necessary to pursue social action projects and educational strategies to ensure equality and revolutionary empowerment.

McLaren urges revolutionary multiculturalism as a means of countering the approach of contemporary neoconservative educational reform which he calls “white terror” (1995, 117). Kellner’s (2003) book on Terror War echoes McLaren’s (and Marcuse’s 1972) emphasis on the use of terror by the U.S. as a means of domestic and global social control. The resurgence of institutional racism in the U.S. heightens also interpersonal expressions of bigotry. Tanehisi Coates reports of the experience of prominent black actor, Forest Whitaker, being stopped and frisked in a sandwich shop near Columbia University by “The Good, Racist People”:

New York is a city, like most in America, that bears the scars of redlining, blockbusting and urban renewal. The ghost of those policies haunts us in a wealth gap between blacks and whites which has actually gotten worse over the past 20 years. But much worse it haunts black people with a kind of invisible violence that is given tell only when the victim happens to be an Oscar winner. . . . I am trying to see Sean Penn or Nicolas Cage being frisked at an upscale deli. . . . And right then I knew that I was tired of good people, that I had had all the good people I could take. (*The New York Times* March 7, 2013 p. A-23)

Michael Moore’s (2001) *Stupid White Men* self-critically called our attention to this characteristic phenomenon, and describes Moore’s own engagement to oppose it. Douglas Kellner’s *Grand Theft 2000* (2001) criticized further the institutional dimension of the stolen 2000 presidential election, emphasizing the “shocking civil rights violations of African American voters, who were illicitly removed from voter registration lists, whose efforts to vote were blocked, and whose votes were not tabulated” (2001, 154) by means of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision, *Bush v. Gore* 531 U.S. 98 (2000).

And now, as I complete the editing of this volume, we have just witnessed Justice Antonin Scalia’s remarks during oral arguments in the Supreme Court’s review of the Voter Rights Act indicating his scorn for what he calls a politics of “racial entitlement.”¹ Scalia’s record on racial justice matters is atrocious. He wrote the Supreme Court decision that struck down the anti-hate speech laws in St. Paul, Minnesota, that were used to prosecute Klans-



Figure 13.2. “The Loser Is Perfectly Clear” *Bush v. Gore* 531 U.S. 98 (2000) by Jerome Heckmann. Art reproduced with permission of Jerome Heckmann.

men who burned a cross on a black family’s lawn (Reitz 2000, 157–58; 2009b, 225). So the Klan got off, and the law against hate speech ruled unconstitutional because it supposedly limited free speech forcing the racists to fight with “one-hand tied behind their back” while the forces fighting against racism could use both hands! Such is the wisdom of the Supreme Court as represented by Scalia.

Marcuse’s critique of pure tolerance opposes exactly this sort of ideology. It is grounded in his defense of emancipatory political action for equality and liberty rights, that is, of human rights as a universal entitlement. His iconic cultural critique during the 1960s and 1970s shattered much of the silence on matters of racial discrimination that was structured into the conventional study of philosophy and education in the U.S.A. By introducing students in the social sciences and humanities to the Frankfurt School’s view of critical theory, Marxism, and classical Greek and German philosophy, he furnished his readers with a theoretical orientation otherwise largely untaught in U.S. culture. Multidimensionality functions as a restorative presence within Marcuse’s philosophizing, as it should be for all educators, but often does not for those of us trained in the dominant Anglo-American patterns and habits of

thought in today's system of U.S. higher education. This "classical dimension" in Marcuse's thought enabled him to assess critically the behaviorism, empiricism, logical positivism, and racism still present in many unreconstructed, monocultural, areas of the academy. As an extension of his humanist philosophy of labor, Marcuse reclaimed elements of the classical philosophical traditions in order to confront the culture of finance capitalism with an immanent critique of its own philistinism and provincialism. His phrase, the "Great Refusal," crystallized his call for a systems-level analysis of social forces and social structures and the determinate negation(s) of them. Like Lukács and Marx before him, Marcuse sought not only refusal, but also a concrete philosophy that could envision from the conditions of the present intelligent choices about real possibilities for our future. Critical political economy forms the compass of this philosophy and the needle points toward commonwealth.

NOTE

1. Amy Davidson, "In Voting Rights, Scalia Sees a 'Racial Entitlement,'" in the "Close Read" blog of *The New Yorker*, February 28, 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/closethread/2013/02/in-voting-rights-scalia-sees-a-racial-entitlement.html#ixzz2Mriqv04Y>.

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Chapter Fourteen

Cultural Origins of African Humanism and Socialism (*Ujamaa*)

Alfred Taligoola Kisubi

Following World War II, an Africanist intellectual movement characterized by African humanism and socialism emerged contributing to the world a scholarship of, by, and for Africans on the continent in search of a new identity as a people liberated from Western colonialism (Wright 1984; Walker and Hountondji 1985; Momoh 1985; Dixon 1997; Kishani 1985). Pan-Africanism, nationalism, Négritude, and African socialism or *Ujamaa* are some of the movements that ensued from this school, which tries to appreciate the cultures of Africa with ethnomethodological methods. For many these became the sound Afro-centric paradigm for African studies and the African Cultural Revolution (Okot P'Bitek 1973) and a basis for Afrocentrism in academia.

In Tanzania in 1961 Julius Nyerere started Kivukoni College (now called Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy) for adult learners. In 1971 Kivukoni College was transformed to inculcate the Tanganyika African National Union Party's (TANU) ideology of African socialism and self-reliance. The main functions of Kivukoni Ideological College, as it then became known, were to spread and reinforce the ideology of TANU by interpreting, teaching, analyzing and defending it, and in so doing to raise the level of understanding of leaders and the masses at large.

A similar Afrocentricity emerged in the early 1980s in the United States as a theory within the academic context of African American studies. Afrocentricity was articulated by Molefi Kete Asante, a professor of African American studies at Temple University and creator of the first Ph.D. program in African American studies in the nation, in three major essays published between 1980 and 1990. At its core, Afrocentricity is a theory concerned

with African epistemological relevance, also referred to as centeredness or location. The ultimate goal of Afrocentricity is the liberation of African people from the grips of Eurocentrism. The primary and indispensable mechanism to achieve this goal is the fostering of African intellectual agency.

In the 1960s a vigorous social science developed to contribute to the world a home-grown scholarship by and for Africans in search of a new identity as sovereign states. To sound the “return to African ways” drum in East Africa, there was Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, best described as Kenya’s George Washington, the writer of *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938). His friend and teacher, Bronislaw Malinowski writes in the introduction, that the book “is one of the first really competent and instructive contributions to African ethnography by a scholar of pure African parentage” (Malinowski in Kenyatta [1938] 1965, xiii). Kenyatta himself dedicated the book to “all the dispossessed youth of Africa for perpetuation of Communion with the ancestral spirits . . . and in the firm faith that the dead, the living, and the unborn will unite to rebuild the destroyed shrines” (Kenyatta [1938] 1965, xx). In the book Kenyatta discusses the African social institutions and their cultural heritage. He dispels the view that was held by Europeans that the African had no system of education. On the contrary the African had an elaborate education system which molded the individual into a complete personality.

Likewise, the African had a form of industry, marriage, family, religion, economy, and a system of land tenure, and above all an acceptable popular government. In essence, Kenyatta’s anthropological writing, which was in the spirit of Négritude, was later on to make a considerable impact on young writers in East Africa and elsewhere on the continent. The theme of cultural conflict between the African and the European colonial legacy pre-occupied the pens of many African writers. Kenyatta’s views on the pride in African culture summoned black people back to their roots as did the Négritude perspective developed by Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire and used in Paris during the 1950s to agitate for African nationalism in Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean.

Following Kenyatta’s legacy, the independence of many African states in the late 1950s and 1960s was guided by vigorous social science searching for an African political and economic culture based on African traditions. The *Zeitgeist* became known as *African Socialism* in Nkrumah’s Ghana; *Ujamaa* in Julius Nyerere’s Tanzania; *African Humanism* in Kenneth Kaunda’s Zambia, and the *Common Man’s Charter* in Milton Obote’s Uganda.

Writings by political thinkers and statesmen of the time reflected the determination to rediscover African values: Nyerere’s *Education for Self-Reliance*, *Uhuru na Umoja* [Independence and Unity], *Uhuru na Ujamaa* [Independence and African Socialism], and *The Arusha Declaration*; Milton Obote’s *Common Man’s Charter* and *The Nakivubo Pronouncements*; Kenneth Kaunda’s *African Humanism* and *The Mulungushi Declaration for Hu-*

manism; and in Kenya Tom Mboya's *Session Paper #10 in Search of African Socialism*.

These are a few classics that are based on the search for a uniquely African identity to negate the colonial legacy. The West associated Africa with a state of simplicity, bordering on ignorance or the simplicity of a child, primitive, rudimentary, unsophisticated, and superstitious. Missionaries and colonists first earnestly and passionately tried to pull up the "primitive" culture root and branch and to put in its place a foreign culture, but at long last independence gave the Africans the freedom of self-determination. Independence was supposed to have brought to the Africans the liberty to judge themselves and be judged by their own yardstick and to let the world know these standards were legitimate and made in Africa. The problem was whether, and whither, they would take this freedom—backward to the past or forward into the future? This is the subject that some fiction writers have eloquently expressed.

Writers of ethnography, political treatises, and fiction composing a literature of cultural protest have either consciously or unconsciously emulated Kenyatta's earlier writing. One towering figure among middle-aged authors in East Africa, now in exile, is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the Kenyan author of plays, essays, stories and six novels, a humanitarian Marxist best known for *Petals of Blood* (1977). This is a flawed but grand epic of post-colonial Kenyan politics. His early writings were concerned with the history of Kenya, and developed themes of conflict between African and Western values. He became concerned about the betrayal of independence by the Kenyan African government, especially in his classics: *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), and a *Grain of Wheat* (1967). All three of his novels show various generations of the Kikuyu, his own ethnic group, struggling to prevent the loss of their traditions, their sense of identity, while painfully trying to assimilate some aspects of Western modernity. Ngũgĩ's protagonists find that this assimilation is a self-defeating process, as it evolves with his characters Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child* and Waiyaki in *The River Between*, for the more knowledge they acquire and the closer they get to this foreign culture, the farther they move from their own. Hence they become alienated figures drifting back and forth between the two traditions, African and Western. His third novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, is also set in central province of Kenya and blends Kikuyu legends into a complex narrative. In this novel he creates suspense in the relationships between several different characters that represent opposing views in their struggle for independence. Some critics dismissed Ngũgĩ as a left wing political propagandist in respect to two of his works, *Petals of Blood* and *The Devil on the Cross* (1982), in which he criticizes peripheral capitalism in Kenya and points to an inevitable revolution against its excesses. In *Detained* (1982), Ngũgĩ observes that prison is part and parcel of the capitalist economic system's continuous process of

exploitation and oppression of the Kenyan people. Since moving to England in 1982 and thereafter to the U.S., where he now lives, Ngũgĩ has published a major novel *Matigari* (1989), and *Decolonizing the Mind* (1994), a book of essays with some softening of political rhetoric. Recently, Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) mounts a nuanced but caustic political and social satire of the corruption of African society as it struggles to embrace the draconian trimmings of globalization, a neo-colonial wolf in a sheep's skin.

In Uganda, anthropologist Okot P'Bitek wrote *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (1971) in which he showed how European scholars had demeaned African religions, which he tried to reappraise in *Religion of the Central Luo* (1971). The most prolific writer on religion was John Mbiti, a Kenyan professor of philosophy and religion at Makerere University in Uganda. His major work is *African Religions and Philosophy* (1985), which is a systematic study of the attitudes of mind and belief which have evolved in many societies in Africa, and *Concepts of God in Africa* (1971).

In *Song of Lawino* (1966), Okot P'Bitek is preoccupied with the modern African struggle with her past and the threat Western culture presents. *Song of Lawino* is certainly the most fascinating poem to come out of English-speaking Africa to date. This lengthy piece of literary art written in Acholi and translated by the author was originally titled "Stick to the Old Ways." Hence it has obvious affinities with many of the anti-colonialist writers in both East and West Africa. Superficially this is a poem that strikes out against foreign influence in African life, but more profoundly it is a story of a man who finds himself divided, much like the characters Njoroge or Waiyaki in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. He is drawn both to his cultural heritage and to the essentially Western-oriented modernity.

In Okot P'Bitek's other noted poem, *Song of Ocol* (1970), Ocol wants to obliterate completely Africa's past, and hang on to his half-baked Western modernity. He knows the promise of independence (*Uhuru*, in Swahili) has been violated, and he feels guilty that he is one of those who have profited from this. In his last poems, *Song of a Prisoner* and *Song of Malaya* (1971) he writes of *Uhuru* wrecked; with the promise of independence shattered, the poet's only dream now, reminiscent of *Song of Lawino*, is to return to the past, to the old Acholi customs, just like Sheik Shabaan, a Tanzanian, who writing in Swahili asked Africans to look to their heritage for their values. Shabaan uses Swahili in the hope that it would become the major language of East Africa and is convinced that European languages should not be used in African education. Like Ngũgĩ and Okot P'Bitek, Shabaan is an anti-colonialist and a traditionalist.

In contrast, Khamimwa, a Kenyan poet, represents a myriad of voices in Africa, who were not impressed by the unrealistic romanticism of the anticolonial Négritudists and traditionalists. In fact he wrote a poem in response to

Senghor. As you read the passage from it, try to decide what he dislikes about Senghor's Négritude and if his criticism is fair:

Do not remind me of things that are gone
 Nor the splendor that was in yesteryear;
 Do not sing of my mother's laughter
 Do not dream of ancestral hearth
 Nor the piety of communing ancients;
 Let Shaka alone;
 And let Sundiata be . . .
 But tell me how to do
 Tell me how to be
 Tell me how to become . . . (Kariara and Kitonga 1977, 7)

Most of the above-mentioned poets and political writers described the ancient African ways of life and thought as these unfolded within small social formations consisting of family, neighborhood, and village groups. Members of these groups and societies were held together in a manner grounded in a system of cooperative economics, collective work, and responsibility: *Ujamaa* (Collier 1986; Nyerere 1971). This has also been termed African humanism (Senghor 1965; Dunayevskaya 1965) because it was characterized by a sense of social solidarity, empathy, and equality. Not the land alone, nor the tools alone, could generate prosperity. Social labor was the key factor. When the community prospered, every individual within it prospered. Europeans of the nineteenth century termed such communities a form of *Gemeinschaft* (communal society) in contrast with societies having a highly differentiated, i.e., modern and unequal division of labor, a *Gesellschaft* (Ferdinand Toennies [1887] 1957).

Pre-colonial Africans lived in close-knit social units in which education culture and freedom were realized through living and doing. Within these units, people depended on various systems of indigenous education as a means of preparing their young for leadership, responsibility, and productive life. The role of educating people was a collective responsibility of the community. Education was universal, free, life-long and unstructured. It involved situational learning and tenacity, which ensured that the learner was not alienated from the home environment. How was all this possible? Humans lived by being guided by the philosophies of *community* and *kinship*, based on the virtue of *co-operation* rather than *competition* (Okot P' Bitek 1986).

In the United States Maulana Karenga, creator of *Kwanzaa*, an extensive and widespread celebratory holiday based on his philosophy of *Kawaida*, is an activist-scholar committed to a "dignity-affirming" life for all human beings. One of the sources of Karenga's philosophy of *Kawaida* is the liberation (*Uhuru*) narratives and mythic realities of African people, which he studied at Kivukoni College created by Julius Nyerere to teach adult Tanzanians.

Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce seven basic values of African culture which contribute to building and reinforcing family, community, and culture among African American people as well as Africans throughout the world African community. These values are called the *Nguzo Saba* which in Swahili means the Seven Principles: *Umoja* (unity); *Kujichagulia* (self-determination); *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility); *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics); *Nia* (purpose); *Kuumba* (creativity); *Imani* (faith). The *Nguzo Saba* stand at the heart of *Kwanzaa*. They are the building blocks for community.

COMMUNITY

In the past, African elders were revered for their wisdom and their special roles as priests, prophets, medicine men and women, and above all as “reference books.” Kinship to both the living and the dead was expected of each individual in society. Although each people (tribe) had its own distinct language, these languages were related to one another, and can be classified into families. The main linguistic groups are the Pygmies (Bambuti), Bantu, the Hamites, and the Nilotics. There are factors which determine or describe the limits of one people (tribe or community) from another. Each society has at least traditionally its own geographical area, its own land, and its own country. Some people being chiefly pastoral move over a large stretch of land in search of water and pasture (Mbiti 1985; Mazrui 1991; Kisubi 2011).

A common culture is another characteristic of each people. Members of one group share a common history (mythology and legends), which is usually traced to the founding father or mother and to the national leaders, priests, prophets, rainmakers, and warriors. The Abagusii of Kenya whom I studied say that their founding fathers were *Monto* and *Engoro*. The Basoga of Uganda, my own group, says our founding father was *Mukama*, while the Baganda invoke *Kintu* and his wife *Nambi*. In Kenya the Luo have *Luanda Magere*, and the Kikuyu invoke *Gikuyu* and his wife *Mumbi*.

Each ethnic group had its own distinct social and political organization before Arabic and European influence came. Now many tribes belong to the same nation state, which is a replica mainly of European colonialism. The family, age-cohort groups, special persons in the society, marriage customs, and political personages still owe their allegiance to tribal roots. Each people had its own religious system and no person was converted from one tribal religion to another. Any member born in the same community had to participate in and partake of the group.

KINSHIP

In a community or tribe, one should show a deep sense of kinship, which is one of the strongest forces and outstanding feature of traditional African life. Kinship is estimated through consanguinity (birth), affinity (marriage), and blood (clan). The importance of kinship to the community is that it controls the way people or individuals behave in society. It controls social relationships, and governs marital customs (incest taboos). This means that each individual is a brother, or a sister, father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, cousin, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, uncle or aunt. According to an old proverb, "One Man (person) is no Man (person)." Only by living together within our families and with our fellows organized under established (consensual) and recognized (respected) rules and relationships can we truly become a community of charity and justice. An extended sense of kinship, with all it implies, has been one "technology" Africa might well transfer to those societies which are affluent but poor in family values.

Since everyone was related in some way to everyone else, each one of them was expected to know what was expected of him or her, what he or she expected in return. To provide closer human co-operation, especially in hard times of crisis and conflict or even in good times of feasting and celebration, was one of the expectations and obligations of the individual. Unity in all walks of life was another. Respect and co-operation in charity were values that Africans highly regarded and expected of an individual. Attitudes have changed today as a result of Western-propelled "modernization" and many of the elderly feel alienated and sometimes insulted by the onslaught of Western influence.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM

Before the coming of European and American missionaries, African children did not go to school for formal education. Instead, they learned the history and laws of their ethnic group from the old people of their village. Boys were taught to be honest and brave and to have respect for their ancestors, parents, and neighbors. They learned much through songs, stories, and dances. Women taught the girls special songs and dances that were for women only. The tasks of daily living were taught to the children by their parents. As they worked with their parents, the children learned to hunt, fish, farm, and keep house. Much was also learned through peer interaction between children of the same age cohort. There were no professionally trained teachers as we know them today.

The parents and other elders were the natural teachers. There was a systematic, though informal, *unfolding pattern of life that embraced each devel-*

oping individual. The period of growth from childhood to adulthood was of primary importance to a person and the community as a whole. The survival and future of the community considerably depended on these milestones: pregnancy, birth, naming, initiation (both physical and educational), and marriage. These were marked by special rites, customs, and feasts in order to stress the importance of all this. Many of those customs have fallen into disuse; respect for life has suffered much. The result: “modern” social disorders that plague the West are rampant in Africa too.

Good manners were emphasized in the curriculum of traditional education. Members of each ethnic community had some folkways and mores, which composed an accepted informal code of social conduct. The elders used this code of conduct to punish or reward action or behavior in society. Respect for elders, good eating manners, virginity before marriage, courage among the boys, coyness among the girls, are some of the examples of the values that traditional leaders treasured and reinforced in the community as acceptable conduct from generation to generation. Thus the parents and the community at large formed a group of traditional teachers whose duty it was to guide the young, so that they could develop the values, beliefs and manners accepted in their society (Tiberondwa 1998).

Many African languages have quite a long tradition of writing. A considerable amount of literary work has been produced in languages like Luganda, Luo, Gikuyu, Chichaga, Kisii and many others, but then, this is a recent colonial heritage. Writing was unknown in pre-colonial East Africa. Instead, oral traditions formed most of peoples’ culture. They showed the peoples’ ways of living. It was by word-of-mouth that elders transmitted to the young the customs, beliefs, and expectations of the clan, chiefdom, kingdom, and tribe: through folk tales, legends, myths, proverbs, riddles and other genres of oral arts.

Forms of oral literature included also religious chants, incantations, war dirges, tongue twisters, funeral dirges, poetry, and so on. Some of these can be sung or recited or chanted. Oral literature, therefore, is a collective term embracing all the creative works of humans as spoken or passed on in this manner—a peoples’ unwritten literature.

We all know that animals and human beings owe their existence to each other and also each to their kind; each species has an important part to play on Mother Earth. Between them there is an ecological law of interdependence. Through animal stories and animal characters personified, the animal-man symbiosis was dramatized, and the idea passed on to new generations.

Secondly, the oral tradition used the arts of story-telling, diction, and rhetorical expression to teach language skills to young language users. The importance of language in any society cannot be underestimated. A person is considered mature by the ability to use language precisely to articulate thoughts and feelings.

Through listening to folktales, proverbs, riddles, tongue twisters, and oral poetry, one is able to master the many required facets of language needed within society. This is very important, as it aided intellectual development and growth, and created awareness of the milieu in which one lived. For example, among the Abagusii of Kenya, as in most African or traditional societies, the young learned the nomenclature and nature of numerous flora and fauna through hearing stories and songs relayed by knowledgeable elders. The youth learned under open skies, in the course of their play with peers; while herding cattle, goats, and sheep; or, as for wild animal names, while hunting game.

Thirdly, and above all, oral literature was for entertainment. Stories were told and songs sung for the purpose of entertaining people at leisure.

The study of oral literature is, therefore, the study of culture, traditions, and customs of a traditional society whose art, manners, and mode of life in its civilization, as developed through time, are recorded, expressed and passed on in song and utterance and memory for the essential part they play in traditional education, language skills, and entertainment.

Folk tales taught the audience such virtues as friendship, teamwork, craftsmanship, responsibility, accountability, bravery, honesty, generosity, reliability, comradeship, interdependence, and respect (Okot P'Bitek 1978). This included concern for the high or low, the fortunate and unfortunate members of society, and they taught us dexterity (skills in handling life) and nimbleness (quickness in understanding). They also taught us much about the negative traits and forces of human nature: vices like laziness, selfishness, greed, hatred, cruelty, envy, wantonness (irresponsibility and caprice), unchastity, immorality, and licentiousness were treated such that we avoid them in life. Here is the folktale "Mũkoma and his Wife":

People of the land known as "We Shall Eat Together" lived in harmony with one another. When there was famine and when there was no famine, they shared whatever they had. Often they had visitors, although they were not aware the visitors were to come. The people served the visitors with whatever food was prepared or else they cooked fresh food for them.

But Mũkoma and his wife were gluttonous. Whenever they heard a visitor coming to the house, Mũkoma would say to his wife, "My love, hide the food on the utaa. There is a visitor coming and he or she should not find us eating." Then after the visitor left, Mũkoma would tell his wife, "Bring the food and let's resume eating. The visitor is gone."

One day, a neighbor named Mũtondo went to Mũkoma's house at night. He called when he arrived at the door saying, "Who is here in this home of Mũkoma?" Immediately, Mũkoma told his wife to hide the food because Mũtondo was there. Unfortunately, Mũtondo heard Mũkoma's words. When Mũkoma's wife had hidden the food, he said, "We are home; come in."

Meanwhile, Mũtondo was thinking, "So, Mũkoma and his wife hide their food up on the utaa whenever they hear a visitor coming."

A few days later, Mūkoma became sick and died. His wife went to Mūtondo seeking for advice and told him, “My husband has died. Come and show me what to do with his body.”

Mūtondo replied to Mūkoma’s wife saying, “Go and do with the body what you both used to do with food whenever a visitor came to your home.”¹

This tale teaches with a negative example. In other folktales love, kindness, generosity, magnanimity (graciousness), humility, obedience, respect for old age, and veneration (regard with deep respect) of the sages were depicted to benefit the individual and society, and negative attitudes were shown to be destructive of self and community (Achebe [1959] 1994). Some folk tales showed the superiority of intelligence and wit over physical size and strength such as the story of “The Hare and the Elephant,” which is found in many African societies. African cultures traditionally referred to “the hare in the moon,” instead of the “man in the moon” familiar to Europeans. Because elephants were inadvertently trampling the hares, of which they barely took notice, the wisest hare addressed the elephants as an emissary of the “hare in the moon.” The “hare in the moon” has sufficient stature even in the elephants’ estimation to get them to listen, be more mindful of the damage they were carelessly inflicting, and change their ways.

In many African stories animal symbols or figures are used. A classic example of such a fable or allegory is the Abagusii story of “The Leopard and the Hyena,” which teaches the moral that to appear respectable and successful in the eyes of society, we must approach and solve our problems with care and patience. When the leopard and the hyena approached god to get spots on their bodies, the hyena hurried through the painting process, but the leopard was calm and patient. As a result the leopard’s spots are more colorful and elegant than those of the impatient hyena.

The narrator used folk tales to entertain the audience. Vivid narration and songs were also to enliven the evening. I remember grandfather telling us some folk tales with songs to which we danced until we went to sleep. In most cases we missed the moral of the stories. After repeated narration by the elders, the stories did stick in the children’s minds. The children narrate the same stories in peer groups to entertain themselves. So folk tales teach the children the art of telling stories. They were also used to teach and spread religious ideas. Up to now many African peoples have plenty of such stories and still tell them to the young that make the time to listen. Folk tales are a valuable and very important source of information, and telling them is a means of communication.

Proverbs are widely used in ordinary conversations for warning and for guidance. Among the Ibo of Nigeria, as Chinua Achebe ([1959] 1994) puts it in *Things Fall Apart*, proverbs are the palm wine with which words are eaten. The good use of proverbs is regarded as a sign that they were condensed by



Figure 14.1. The Hare and the Elephant. The Elephant sees the “Hare in the Moon’s” reflection in the pool. Anonymous Syrian painter of 1354. Source: Bodleian Library Oxford University.

the great ancestors, their unbeaten wisdom passed on from generation to generation to perpetuate the identity of the clan and tribe.

In a proverb one or two morals are contained in a single short sentence. Each proverb deals with some aspect of life so all of them in a language cover the whole life. For instance, some proverbs deal with co-operation and human relations; others are related to authority and domestic affairs. Some concern relationships between parents and children, wives and husbands. A code of behavior is in proverbs. Old people and parents use them to deal with children to convey precise moral lessons, warning and advising, since they make a greater impact on the mind than ordinary words because they are pithy. Proverbs are used to teach tribal religious messages, too. They contain religious beliefs, ideas, morals, and warnings (Okot P’Bitek 1985). They speak about God, the world, man, human relationships, and the nature of things, and so on. Here are some examples:

“The living poor must never become laughing stock.” This discourages people from laughing at the poor but also encourages the poor to pull themselves up by their own means to avoid scorn. “Riches have wings,” because, like a bird, they fly from one home to another. A poor man might one day be

rich and the rich man's wealth may disappear. "Riches are like a shadow" because they may disappear as the shadow does when there is no more light. "One who rejects advice will cross the sea in a clay boat." He will be told not to sail in the clay boat, but his obstinacy will not allow him to take the advice, so he'll go ahead, it will crack or dissolve and he will drown! Likewise anyone who refuses advice in anything will fall into trouble. "A child, who has never travelled widely, thinks that his mother cooks best." This proverb promotes diversity. It implies that experiencing a variety of things enables one to appreciate the convergences and divergences in human experience. "Roaring fire burns the porridge, but slow simmering fire gets the porridge ready." Both teach us care and dexterity while at work.

"Slow walker reaches far" and "chameleon reaches beyond the hills" promote caution, precision, care, and slow speed. They also teach us not to overlook or laugh at people, who to us seem to be incapable of achieving their goals because their means appear to be inefficient. They too achieve great things; so they too must be respected and reckoned with.

Riddles among Africans were and are still used during leisure time to test innovation, imagination, and liveliness, and to teach the history and moral values of the community. Every African culture has a conventional language for performing riddles. Among the Basoga the performance of a riddle is always like this: the proposer does not monopolize the performance. Turns are quickly changed so that everyone in the audience has a chance to test the wits of all present, for wit does not belong to one person. The setting is sometimes in the evening by a fireside, but not always. Children playing by themselves, or looking after animals, may choose to while away time with the intricacies of riddles.

As to who begins the evening of riddles, there is no rule. Mother, father, grandfather, or grandmother may start, or any of the children, especially those most charismatic. The performance unfolds in the following manner: Proposer (shouting): Kikoiko (Riddle!). Audience (shouting): *Kidhe!* (Let it come!). Proposer: "I have three brothers but if one is absent I don't eat food! Who am I?"

If it is easy, the audience does not applaud the one who gets the answer. They feel the previous proposer is not witty, so another proposer shouts, "Kikoiko!" starting the performance all over again. However, if the audience does not know the answer and they resort to blunders and blatant guesswork, the proposer feels proud of his wit. The answer to this riddle is: "a firestone" (three firestones comprise a cooking platform within the fire pit; two are not sufficient).

Among the Abagusii, grandparents perform riddles to grandchildren, usually by a fireside in grandmother's hut as they sit around the hearth, warming themselves, waiting for dinner. The children's minds are challenged and preoccupied until the food is ready. Children can also challenge their grand-

parents with their own riddles. Children also pass time with riddles for entertainment or competition. The ability to answer riddles and pose some manifests the ability to reason out and interpret things. Thus Africans develop the habit of passing time in useful transmission and evaluation of essential knowledge.

Etymological stories are used to mean *an account for the beginning* of these natural features in order to appease human curiosity, especially the young who test the wisdom of the elders by sharp “why” and “how” questions about their surroundings. These are the why and how stories that explain certain phenomena, such as why the frog has no tail; why the mole digs tunnels underground; why the buffalo has no hair and lives in water; why the guinea fowl lives in the bush while the domestic fowl lives in houses; why the hen scratches the ground probably in search of something; why the dog’s nose is always wet; and so on.

The Basoga of Uganda explain that the frog was stupid and improvident when God gave him a chance to take from the supply of tails, he procrastinated until none were left. This becomes an instrument of abuse against a lazy person, who is said to be lazy as the frog who missed out on tails when they were supplied.

The *trickster story* tells of a person or animal who does something to other people or animals in order to deceive, outwit, or outdo them. A trickster can be depicted in a story as an undesirable swindler, dangerous to society, or a desirable character who teaches us tricks of survival in life. African people have a lot of stories where the trickster is tricked to make him look ridiculous. For example, the story of the “Jackal and the Hen,” where the jackal wants to outwit the hen to come out of the hen house and draw near because there is “peace” and no animal should catch another animal as prey because of the peace.

The jackal is a hypocrite: he calls the hen “mother,” but inwardly he wants to eat her. He greets her humbly in order to hoodwink her. The hen is humble. She is too weak to fight the jackal physically. The only way left for her to fight is her wit, which is mightier than her physical strength. So the hen, small and weak, tricks the jackal, greedy and ridiculous. She casts her eyes into the distance. She keeps staring over the fields until the jackal asks, “What is it that you see from there that you stare so?” “Me?” the coy hen says. She even laughs loudly to imply that she has revealed the jackal’s trick and soon she outwits him. She says the wild dogs that she can see in the distance will do nothing to the jackal because of the peace that jackal himself talks of.

She catches the storyteller with another story. But the jackal says: “The dogs did not attend the peace meeting!” He says this only to sustain his lie, which has by now completely withered. He runs away for his life, so fast that a cloud of dust rises in great clouds behind him. The cunning devil is now a

humiliated caricature for us to laugh at, and whose ways we are never to copy. This is a part to the moral in the story. The second part of the moral is given by the hen. She is calm, motherly, dignified, and clever. Though small, her wit liberates her—wisdom is not anyone's monopoly.

Many other stories in Africa have a trickster who wins by deception. These stories amplify wit as a necessity for grappling with life's hardships. They show us that the small can make an impact on society. They warn the mighty not to overlook the presence of the small. The Basoga of Uganda have such a story, *The Lion and the Chameleon*. They say once upon a time a chameleon and lion conflicted about the kingship over animals. The lion roared he was the king, but the chameleon said the lion had no *mandate*. So one day they decided to race and see who would get to a certain place first. All animals were summoned to wait at the finish line. He who won the contest would be king.

The race was a kind of political campaign. Some official animals were there to watch the start. The lion ran very fast and the animals who had lined up along the track clapped, laughed, and praised him. He soon got to the finish line where many animals had placed the throne for the winner of the race to sit on immediately when he got there. So he sat, sweating and gasping for breath. "Do not sit on me and break my bones. I was here before you," said the chameleon. He had coiled his tail to hold tight onto the lion's tail when the race began. Clinging to the tail, he was brought to the finish line by the racing lion. When the lion turned to sit, the chameleon managed to reach the throne first. Since that time the lion hunts all animals, because they conspired to overthrow him. They are eaten because treason leads to death. The race also has consequences for the chameleon. People, who are chameleons, play tricks, or change colors like the chameleon, are not to be trusted.

Within indigenous African societies there were also quasi-formal systems of education. Some people acquired certain professional skills and through apprenticeship acted as professional teachers to the young. There were some herbalists and medicine men and women or shamans who specialized in the arts and sciences of healing the sick and physically and sometimes psychologically afflicted. Some of them were believed to have metaphysical powers to cure the sick without the application of any medicine. Other specialists included backcloth makers, who make cloth for wearing and burying the dead, and black-smiths, who made beautiful rings out of copper and made spears, bows and arrows for hunting and community defense, carpenters, potters, makers of fishing gear, canoes and boats, fishing hooks and fishing baskets, tobacco-pipe-makers, basket weavers, mat weavers, and potters, who made household pots, bowls and other ceramic items. Members of the hereditary ruling families were supposed to be specialists in the art of administration, diplomacy and public relations. They also were drilled in language arts and rhetoric, because they needed these skills for political oratory. To

some of these elders, as teachers, children were sent to learn various special skills having to do with work in the community.

As examples from various ethnic groups illustrated above, most of African oral literature has cross-cultural consistencies, which we can say are African, because they are universal to Africa. They constitute the earliest foundations of African philosophy and African humanism.

CONCLUSION

This chapter emphasized how the ideological, political, socio-economic, and cultural institutional forces of African traditional society—combined with semantic creativity to influence the philosophy and practice of day-to-day life through oral expression and community symbiosis. Readers are called upon to exercise their sociological imagination in trying to research and practice African humanism. Borrowing from African traditional society will enable readers to see how far post-industrial societies have faltered. The author's conviction is that humans can perform a more responsive interaction with each other only if they understand the variables that shape their neighbors in a global village. Humans cannot fully comprehend each other and deal politically with each other peacefully, unless they interact with and study each other with unbiased mutual enthusiasm and empathy.

NOTE

1. See <http://kwanzaaguide.wordpress.com/2009/12/29/cooperative-economic-fourth-day-of-kwanzaa-ujamaa-day/>.

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Chapter Fifteen

The Second Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lloyd C. Daniel

This speech was delivered at the University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC) on January 17, 1991, at the height of the first invasion of Iraq. What we learn from it today is needed more than ever.—CR

Good Morning. It's good to see you here. It's good to be here in the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., what he stood for, what he worked for.

In front of me is a once secret document from the desk of J. Edgar Hoover, dated March 4, 1968, one month to the day before Martin Luther King was murdered. It is circumstantial evidence that the FBI murdered Dr. King, the United States government. It calls for the steps to be taken to neutralize and eliminate opposition to the United States government. When I presented this to the law school at UMKC last year, no one in the room challenged that it was circumstantial evidence. Half of the people in jail for murder today are in jail for less circumstantial evidence.

The point is this, if Dr. King had, in fact, been a moderate leader who just wanted to sit at the front of the bus, who just wanted the right to vote, he would be alive today. But he was murdered because of what he talked about in his book *Chaos or Community*. He was murdered because he came out against racism, not just that, but militarism and economic exploitation.

From the very beginning of this nation, the use of military aggression in a racist context has characterized this society. I'm going to speak bluntly and candidly, because the time is deadly serious.

From the beginning when we murdered the people who were here first, the Native people, we were sure it was a democracy. When we enslaved African people to pimp their backs for profit, we were sure it was a democra-

cy. When half the Americans had no right to vote, for over 100 years after the beginning of the nation, we knew it was a democracy. And even when women gained the right to vote, that was only European women; most African American women and most Latin American women did not gain the right to vote until 1965. And when African American men, who could not vote, went off to fight in World War I, II, Korea, and Vietnam, we were sure it was a democracy. And now that we engage in a genocidal air war against the people of Iraq, we are sure that it is in the name of democracy.

Hypocrites are what we are. Murderers are what we are. That's why you can go to Shawnee Mission and not find any Shawnee.

Dr. King challenged this. He lived for almost five years after his "I Have a Dream" speech. You might want to freeze-frame him before his full peak. You might be afraid to challenge this wicked and brutal foreign policy based upon profit, not democracy. Don't you know and you might not know, especially if all you know about America's foreign policy is what is in the schools or on the media, that it is as controlled today as the media in the Soviet Union.

We don't know for sure what is happening in Iraq. We are getting military news—State Department news.

This country has overthrown more elected governments than Saddam Hussein even has relations with. In the name of democracy. Hypocrites! This nation started talking about freedom and justice for all, while a quarter of America was enslaved. Hypocrites! Fought World War I to make the world safe for democracy and had apartheid where most African and Latin American people live in this society. Hypocrites! Will call peace war and war peace. 1954 in Guatemala, overthrew an elected government. 1973 in Chile, overthrew an elected government. 1965 in the Dominican Republic, overthrew an elected government. 1960 in the Congo, overthrew an elected government, in the name of democracy. King was murdered by this government. But it wasn't just Dr. King they wanted to kill; they wanted to kill the people's challenge to genocide, to murder, to a handful of folks who controlled most of the wealth. Look at it in the representation of the national elected body, Congress. If this is not a rich white male-supremacist dictatorship, then why is not half of Congress female, since half of America is? Why is not a third of Congress of color, since a third of America is? Why is not 95 percent of it working class, since 95 percent of America is? If the Congress that approved this war against Iraq, who approved the war against the Vietnamese, the war against the Koreans, if that Congress is not a rich, white men's social club, it sure looks like one. They are disproportionately represented. Rich white men constitute a faction of this society and no pun intended, we must call a spade a spade.

The historic struggle of African American people for full and complete liberation is a struggle for access to the system, personified by people like

Dr. King and the autonomy (or independence) from it, personified by people like Malcolm X. It takes two wings for a plane to fly, two wings for a liberation struggle to fly. Just like today there are folks like Jesse Jackson on the one side, pressing for multi-national unity; different races, different classes, men and women coming together, demanding justice from this system, which we have a right to demand. When they decide they are going to jump on somebody, they send us up front. You don't have to get any affirmative action to get your share of bombs or poison gas. But the same president that will send young African American men and women, Latin American men and women to war, will stand up and veto a civil rights bill to ensure their justice on this side. Hypocrites! We pay our taxes. That's our money they are using. Don't think we're not going to speak on what you do with our money. We have a right to demand justice. They use our bodies. Don't think we are not going to demand justice and don't think we're not going to call you liars when you lie. We also have a responsibility to ourselves and our ancestors to do for ourselves. That tradition is represented today by people like Minister Louis Farrakhan, but before him Malcolm X, before him Marcus Garvey, before him Nat Turner, Richard Allen, it goes all the way back. This is an historic struggle. But it's not just about great men and women. It's also about average everyday folks. Because that's whom the great leaders speak for, as they are whom we speak through.

King didn't start the Montgomery bus boycott that kicked off his career in his mid-20s, and he did not stop growing until they murdered him. He refused to be bought off; he refused to be driven into exile. They were not able to incarcerate him, they were not able to discredit him, and so he faced the ultimate challenge. They took his life. But they did not take his dream.

We must not continue to murder Dr. King. You must read what he said. His dream was not about harmony at any cost. King disrupted harmony in the name of justice. No justice, no harmony. No power, no peace. Dr. King was not the okey-doke who dropped from the sky, gave a good speech and got voting rights and sat down. He wasn't that. You might want him to be, that might be all you want. But he wasn't that. Find another hero. Find somebody like Colin Powell. Dr. King challenged the foreign policy. That's why it's blasphemous, Dr. King was such a great spiritual leader, to even suggest to having Colin Powell lead the parade, in Atlanta, on King Day. Dr. King challenged United States' imperialism, challenged the notion that the U.S. had the right, wisdom or the ability to run the world. He was not a spear-carrier for that wicked, brutal foreign policy. He was not a gunslinger for imperialism. He wasn't going to go blow up some people he didn't even know, for some folks who hated his ass. Let me speak plainly. You don't want to hear this because a lot of you have mythologized King into just another okey-doke, mainstream, democratic politician. If he were just that, he'd be alive to give us that advice. No, they had to kill the brother.

There might be 100,000 Iraqis dead. Even when they talked on shows this weekend about the human cost, they only talked about the Americans. That's why when you ask people how many people died in Vietnam, they always say between 55,000 and 65,000. Two million Vietnamese died. Don't you know that? I had a student in class one time that said, "Well I thought you meant people." Same attitude we had against the Sioux. Bury my heart at Wounded Knee. If you judge people based on their similarity to you, as having worth and their difference from you, as having no worth, it's easy to knock them off and murder them as Hitler did the Jews. We must judge morality and immorality by one yardstick. South Africa has been defying UN Security Council resolutions all along. We are not invading or bombing. Israel has been defying the same kind of sanctions. We are not invading or bombing; we are aligning with them. People don't want to hear that, but the truth must be told. The American press won't hit upon it. But the truth must be told. We must tell each other.

A Pullman porter started the Montgomery bus boycott. Just like the men and women who came in here and served us the food this morning. A lot of us didn't even look them in the eye, "because they wasn't nobody." Dr. King was just a man with strengths and weaknesses, just like any other man or woman, myself included. You're not perfect; he wasn't either. But he gave his life. Many are not prepared to risk their job. He stands head and shoulders above most of those who criticize him. They should understand that if you are in favor of the U.S. foreign policy, this economic system, racism posing as conservatism, you've lost your way and should have nothing to say. Certainly not about Dr. King, because your tongue might fall out. Get you a new hero. He talked about values and principles of peace and dignity, he also talked about, if you really want peace you'll work for justice. He wasn't talking about peace at all costs or the peace of the graveyard, which is what they gave to him. Dr. King spoke directly to us about the dignity of every person, male or female, whether they have money or not.

That's one of the problems speaking on these college campuses. Some of us think if we get two or three degrees, we are more important than someone who hasn't been to school or who cannot read and write. That's part of our problem. Mimicking the same wicked system that has held our people captive for so many years is not a way out. You are here on this campus for more than a chance to get a car, some nice clothes and a condo. If you are not prepared to struggle for more than that, you are pimping Dr. King. You are using the dead bodies of people who gave their lives for you to sit up in here and get what they have to offer. I admit most of it is brainwashing and training. Training leads to domestication. Education leads to liberation. You never hear that word on this campus. But you can train a dog. Humans need to be liberated. Dr. King gave his life for that.

I'm not here to necessarily support any given opponent of U.S. military aggression, but the similarities between Saddam Hussein, Crazy Horse, and Ho Chi Minh to me, are striking. We have new Indian wars, but they are not against the Sioux, the Apache or the Navajo. Now, they are against the Grenadians, the Panamanians, the Libyans, the Iraqis. And whether you like it or not, a handful of rich European and handful of rich white nations ran the world. They called it colonialism. The separation of Kuwait from Iraq is part of the legacy of British colonialism. Kuwait did used to be a part of Iraq, let it be said. The Iraqis know that for sure, you don't know cause you don't know American History, how the hell you gonna know Middle Eastern history. Grenada and Panama have never been a part of the United States. In many ways what we are telling the Iraqis is, "Who the hell you think you are, us?" Because we could very easily win the military engagement and lose the overall struggle. If modern warfare was mainly about military engagement and body counts, don't you know we would have won in Vietnam, 2,000,000 to 60,000, but they stayed, we left? The people we fought now run Vietnam. Some of us can't understand why we lost. First, we can't understand that we lost. It's hard to understand why you lost, if you don't admit that you lost. Killed 2,000,000 Vietnamese. Don't run nothing there. Modern warfare is essentially political, but with a significant military component that's very visible. But it's very possible to win the military component and lose the war. The most intense bombing in the history of the world, that's what the U.S. is engaging in. It is happening right now in a place that the men who are there bombing and fighting could not find on a map this time last year. Almost like pit bulls, "sic" and you jump on it. They used to give us a spear and a shield to fight each other, now it's a helmet and an M-16. Same bloody job. Why aren't they bombing the European countries? They were leaning on Lithuania. Bomb the Soviet Union. It's not coincidental that the imperialist powers are still trying to control the imperialist powers of the equator. The world of color. That is the racist character of the foreign policy. We want what they have; we'll take it. The Sioux had land, we wanted it, and we took it. The Arabs have oil; we'll take it. Taking what belongs to someone else does not make it yours, it just makes it stolen. If you want to rob and steal, if you want to push a little old lady in the closet or blow her house up, I might not be able to stop it, but don't think I'm gonna co-sign it. We cannot stop the United States in this aggression at this point, but we will speak out against it. They can't make us co-sign it. And just because they have African American men and women and Latin men and women involved in the struggle, it's not our foreign policy. Even on a slave plantation, I see the long line driver, the slave driver in Colin Powell. They got so many Black folks in the Army now, if they didn't have somebody Black in charge, it wouldn't be credible. The slave driver was always black, the master was white. "Massa Bush, he white." The slave driver's Black, Colin Powell. Gonna try to compare him to

King. Somebody asked me, "Should we have ignored the Iraq invasion of Kuwait." It ain't for you to ignore or to do anything about. Who made you the police. It's like, if I had an ugly couch in my living room. Should you ignore it? You ain't got nothing to do with it.

Dracula can't tell Frankenstein nothing. Stop your invasions. Stop your oppression of your own people. Then think about telling somebody else something. The United States of America does not have the right, wisdom or ability to run planet Earth. God is not dead. Dr. King in fact said he could hear God saying to America, "You're too arrogant and if you don't change your ways, I'll rise up and break the backbone of your power and I'll place it in the hands of a nation that doesn't even know my name. Be still and know that I'm God."

God don't live in the White House. Even if these men who portray themselves as Gods, act that way, they are, in fact, bloody, greedy hypocrites. We might not be able to stop them but we will not co-sign their actions. Dr. King in the last speeches of his life spoke out against what he called "the triple evils of racism, militarism and economic exploitation." Many people say that speech is what got him killed. It's the speech that included the "I've been to the mountain top" phrase. He'd been giving it for six months before he was murdered. In effect, the FBI sent him a letter; I don't have it in front of me, saying, "If you don't stop, we will discredit you. The best thing for you to do now is to kill yourself." He didn't get that from the Nazis or the Klan. He got it from the United States government. Your tax dollars sent letters to King to threaten him. He refused though. There are people in this country now that kind of letter would cause them to call a press conference and deny anything they ever said. That kind of letter to many people who now pretend to be leaders, would lead them to slap their mothers, if they thought it would make a difference. Many of these folks who are so-called leaders are nothing more than followers of the same wicked system that holds working people in this society, women and people of color, down. We need a new leadership structure based on the majority of our people. If you're serious you'll lead it. We need a new kind of democracy. The irony of it is that, this strategy is not going to be successful in maintaining superpower status. If anything, it's going to undercut our ability to do just that. The basis for modern superpower status is economic development. That's why a nation like Japan, which barely has a military, is buying up this country. That shows you what you can do if you don't waste half of your national wealth on military adventures. We don't have the money for the homeless, for college scholarships, other types of education, health care, retraining of the workers being turned out of these industries, retooling these industries. We don't have it because we spend the money in the military to make America strong, while America erodes from the inside. What are you defending, if the people have nothing? The war is costing a billion dollars a day. They don't have money to send you to college

but they have money to bomb civilians in Iraq. And don't think they are not bombing civilians on purpose. That's what the Stealth bombers are for. They did it in Panama. Then they played it off saying that it was "only two or three thousand people." In Panama, they blew up the black community of San Miguelito. Blew them up while they slept.

Everybody was sitting at 12:01 p.m. waiting to see if the attack was going to come. It was broad open daylight. Dracula don't come usually in the day, they sleep in the coffins. Bernie Shaw and them were up in the hotel last night talking about, "We can't see nothing but a few lights and all these explosions. Must be missiles. Must be Stealth." No sound, no sight . . . explosion. Not like the B-52s in Vietnam, at least you could hear the bombs incoming. No incoming even. Just explosion, like somebody planted a bomb in the building. High tech, almost Star Trek cloaking device high tech. But technology is not the be all and end all of the world. Dr. King said, "When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, racism, militarism and economic exploitation are incapable of being conquered."

We've gone down a military road to control the world. You can follow them if you want to, but Dr. King wouldn't have. We can't presume to know exactly what he would have said about what's going on now, but we know what he said about Vietnam. If you read, you know what he said about the Congo, about South Africa. A third of his "Chaos or Community" book was about foreign policy and he points to how it's not about democracy, it's about protecting a handful of rich corporations, military interests and American arrogance, so they can somehow run the world, be policeman of the world and can't run their own affairs. Oppress their own people. They couldn't stand his clear and eloquent voice calling them liars and hypocrites. We don't know what's happening in the Middle East now. We don't have any way of knowing. One station you might listen to is KKFI (a Pacifica Network affiliate in Kansas City). They are doing the best job in this town of trying to put out an alternative point of view. By just watching CNN, we don't know. Don't think it's coincidental that Bernie Shaw and them were able to broadcast on through, talking about special relations. That's CIA. Special relationship with who? They ain't going to tell you. We have to wait for some other, more independent, media to come out and say what's going on.

I remember with the invasion of Grenada, I used to live there. They announced that hostilities had ceased. Grenada had been pacified at the height of the time that America was taking casualties. When the war was at its height and there was the most fighting going on, they announced simultaneously on CNN, that it was over. They lied intentionally. Look at the Frontline report on Grenada, National Public Television. They compared what was happening on the ground with what was being said on television and they had nothing to do with one another. Like night and day. It was designed for world

consumption and the consumption of the American public. So, what we are watching today is no different. We don't know what's going on. They did all that bombing and lost one plane, please.

The point is this, let us live Dr. King's dream. Please don't trivialize Dr. King. Please don't make him into just another okey-doke handkerchief head Negro leader. If that were all he was, he'd be on one leg, sliding around the stage with his collar whipped backwards, collecting money now. He was much more than that. Understand that after he gave his "I Have a Dream" speech, he gave more important speeches, deeper speeches. As with most great thinkers, as he matured he got deeper and broader. He went beyond that. They want us to focus on that because that is more manageable. As most Black leaders at the time told him, "stay with civil rights, Dr., don't mix civil rights with foreign policy and the economic system. Don't do that." But he said, "I have to." He said he couldn't come out against violence in the ghettos, unless he came out against what he called, "the greatest purveyor of violence on planet Earth, my own government."

Read what he said. Don't let them tell you who Dr. King was. If you let them tell you who he was, you might not like him either. Let him be who he was. And if you don't want that, if you don't believe that, get another hero. But don't try to put words in his mouth. If he were moderate and corny, he'd be alive, giving us moderate and corny advice. He's a man who gave his life for democratic struggle, for respect of people no matter what kind of money they have, and for peace. But just as importantly, he gave his life for justice and the struggle for justice. No justice, no peace.

Chapter Sixteen

Year Two of the Arab Revolutions

Kevin B. Anderson

The 2011 Arab revolutions have shaken the world, toppling three well-entrenched dictatorships—in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya—in a battle not only for democracy, but also one that raised issues of economic and social justice while attacking neoliberal capitalism. Moreover, they touched off a year of upheaval, from Wisconsin to Spain, and from London to Wall Street. They have brought to mind Karl Marx’s expressed hopes about the internationalization of revolution in another revolutionary period, that of the Polish uprising of 1863: “This time, let us hope, the lava will flow from East to West” (letter to Engels of Feb. 13, 1863, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 453).

However, as dialectics teaches us, there is no progress without contradiction, and as Raya Dunayevskaya’s Marxist-Humanism noted since its inception, counterrevolution arises not just from openly reactionary forces, but can be found in the very innards of revolution itself. (See especially her *Marxism and Freedom* [1958], just translated into Arabic.) This is not of course an inevitability, let alone a cyclical process, but a danger that needs first to be recognized and then fought against. Thus, there was much dismay, not only among their international supporters, but also among Arab revolutionaries themselves, when Islamist parties won big electoral victories in post-revolutionary Tunisia and Egypt, and seemed poised to do well in Libya as well. Then came June’s presidential election in Egypt, when the final round pitted the Muslim Brotherhood, which won very narrowly, against a candidate linked to the Mubarak dictatorship. All of this led many to feel that the hopes of 2011 had been dealt a most severe setback.

To be sure, it must be acknowledged that even though Islamist politics had not dominated the 2011 revolutions themselves, in their aftermath Islamist parties and movements possessed both a cohesion and a clear sense of

purpose lacking in the more secular and leftist groupings. This does not mean that the game is up, however, let alone that the 2011 revolutions were really Islamist at their core. But it must be admitted that Islamism is a bigger danger now than it seemed to be in the heady early months of 2011.

At the same time, we have witnessed, over the past year, the continued articulation of a more secular and leftist politics, whether on the streets or in some of the election returns, both in Egypt and Tunisia. Nor have the large Islamist parties advocated anything resembling Khomeinism or Taliban-style politics, although the minority Salafists have certainly done so. Still, it must be said that even a relatively moderate Islamism is almost always a conservative movement, whether on culture, gender, economic policy, or basic democratic principles, at best akin to groups like the Republican Right in the U.S.A. or the European Christian Democrats.

Over the past two decades, Islamism in various forms—from Hamas in Palestine, to the Muslim Brotherhood and more militant strands in Egypt, to the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria—has been ascendant in the region. It came to the fore in the 1980s, an era of ideological reaction exemplified not only by Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini, but also by Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Pope John Paul II. This legacy did not completely disappear in the fires of 2011, any more than Reagan-Thatcher style neoliberalism has disappeared in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis and the rise of movements like Occupy. However, the 2011 Arab revolutions changed the conversation in the Middle East, taking us beyond the retrogressive duality of nominally secular nationalist dictatorship vs. radical Islamism.

With all this in mind, let us examine year two of the Arab revolutions, especially in Tunisia and Egypt, but with a glance at Libya and Syria as well.

TUNISIA AS BELLWETHER

Tunisia’s youth, women, and workers sparked the new era of revolution with lightning speed with their January 2011 overthrow of an entrenched dictatorial regime. But by October, the elections for a constituent assembly gave a 35 percent plurality to the moderate Islamist Ennahda Party, with the largest secular leftist group, the Congress for the Republic (CPR), receiving only 8 percent of the vote. The militantly secularist Progressive Democratic Party, whose campaign emphasized attacks on Islamism as a reactionary force, won very few votes. Afterwards, Ennahda allowed the CPR’s Moncef Marzouki to become the new president, while its own Hamadi Jebali took over as prime minister.

On the eve of the election, the privately owned Nessma TV showed the celebrated Iranian film *Persepolis*, based upon Marjane Satrapi’s moving leftist-feminist account of growing up as a young woman during the harshest

days of the Khomeini regime in Iran. Outraged by the fact that the central character at one point expresses anger at Allah, an image of whom is also given (this itself considered blasphemous by pious Muslims), militant fundamentalists known as Salafists attacked both the station and the home of its owner, Nabil Karoui. The fact that Karoui had strong links to the old regime undermined support for him among the broader public as well. In May, Karoui was fined \$1,500 for “disturbing public order and undermining good morals” (*Le Monde*, May 4, 2012). In the ensuing months, Salafists, with lavish funding from Saudi Arabia, have taken over about a fifth of the country’s 2,500 mosques, from which they have staged attacks on the Left and challenged the more moderate Ennahda, which says it is opposed to incorporating Sharia law into the constitution.

Over the past year, a number of other cultural and class conflicts have illustrated both the power of retrogressionist forces and the spirited resistance of more secular and leftist ones, with the outcome still in the balance. One big confrontation took place in December 2011, when some 3,000 teachers, students, and workers demonstrated against unemployment, fundamentalism, and corruption outside the Constituent Assembly. Their ranks included mine-workers from the Gafsa region who camped out in tents under the slogan “work, freedom, dignity.” Within a few days, a larger group involving thousands of Islamists, many of them extremist Salafists, staged a counter-demonstration demanding sex segregation at universities and the right of students to wear the full veil in the classroom. A physical attack by the Salafists was narrowly averted.

Then, on February 25, another demonstration of about 3,000 secularists and leftists was staged against the current government’s inaction in the face of Salafist attacks, especially on trade union headquarters, accusing Ennahda of complicity in those attacks. The major speaker, Hocine Abassi, secretary general of the General Union of Tunisian Workers, did not help the cause when he denounced the “imperialist and Zionist plot” against the Assad regime in Syria. Unfortunately, this kind of statement is not uncommon among the Middle Eastern and global left, some of which also supported the Qaddafi regime to the bitter end.

A series of confrontations has also taken place at Manouba University, whose faculty and more secular students have repeatedly repulsed Salafist demands for prayer rooms and allowing students veiled in the niqab, which shows only the eyes, to attend classes. One secular woman student briefly became a hero on national TV in March, after she was filmed being thrown to the ground by a large man while trying to prevent Salafists from replacing the national flag with a black Salafist one. A few days later a large national demonstration of mainly secular women celebrated March 8, International Women’s Day. But the next day, radical Islamist women wearing black veils

demonstrated outside the national TV station, accusing it of being “allied to the left.”

The most recent confrontation involved a major art exhibition in a middle class and secular neighborhood of the capital. Among the artworks was one spelling out the name of Allah with figures of ants, and another depicting the bearded heads of fundamentalist men surrounding a naked woman, whose vagina was covered by a plate of couscous. In response, well-organized Salafist mobs attacked the exhibit hall. A few managed to overwhelm police, getting into the hall and destroying some paintings. Mobs also attacked several police stations. The government condemned the mob attacks, declared a curfew, and carried out a number of arrests. It called for national unity, but Ennahda head Rachid Ghannouchi also framed the events not as a fight over free speech, but as having been caused by both “secular and religious extremists” (Isabel Madraud, “Ambiance délétère en Tunisie après la vague d’éméutes,” *Le Monde*, June 15, 2012). Since then, the exhibition hall has been closed by the government, while a number of the artists have received death threats.

As much of the left sees things, the Ennahda-dominated government has no solution to the class and economic problems that underlay the revolution, such as a depression-level official unemployment rate of 19 percent. Nor has it taken up the grievances of employed workers, like those at the German-owned Leoni auto cable plant, who staged strikes and sit-ins in January and then had to face management threats to close the plant. Instead, the government is allowing cultural conflicts to simmer, both to distract the working people from the real issues and to undermine its opponents among a population that is as a whole more pious than the secular and leftist groups. At the same time, wary of international public opinion, Ennahda has also been careful to distance itself from the Salafist extremists, but without really cracking down on them.

It must also be said, however, that some of the actions of our secular and leftist comrades, like continuing to forbid veiled women to attend classes at Manouba University, need to be rethought, let alone the outrageous support of some for the Assad regime. As Marxist-Humanists, we have never held to a French Enlightenment or Leninist type of atheism, which in any case cannot be found in any of the political programs endorsed by Marx. Instead, we have acknowledged progressive as well as retrogressive trends in religion’s relation to politics. Take, for example, our co-founder Charles Denby’s Lowndes County Christian Movement, a Black liberation association of workers and farmers in Detroit and Alabama that was described so eloquently in part 2 of his *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker’s Journal* (1978).

THE EGYPTIAN LINCHPIN

While neither Tunisia nor Egypt has experienced any significant change in the class and economic structure of society despite having undergone political revolutions, the outcomes have been somewhat different at the political level. Where Tunisians have suffered under the vicissitudes of a new political system dominated by Islamists, Egyptians have seen the survival of important elements of the old military-security-judicial state, along with the ascendance of the Muslim Brotherhood, which remains more fundamentalist than its Tunisian counterpart. As a result of months of painful betrayals and repression, the Egyptian revolutionary forces have learned that they need to oppose not only the military-police apparatus, but also the Brotherhood. Month after month, the revolutionaries have mobilized on Tahrir Square, often in the hundreds of thousands, to keep alive the spirit of February 2011 in the face of violent attacks and even sexual assaults by the military.

For most of the time since the 2011 revolution, as *Le Monde's* Christophe Ayad notes, “[Muslim] Brothers and military men had managed to agree insofar as keeping a lid on the street and the revolutionaries of Tahrir Square” (“Egypt: 60 ans de lutte entre islamistes et militaires,” *Le Monde*, June 18, 2012). This meant helping the military to ram through a slightly amended constitution in March 2011 that favored well-entrenched organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood. It also meant blocking demonstrators from entering Tahrir Square on January 31, 2012. These demonstrators were targeting continued rule by the supposedly interim Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) for its failure to relinquish power and its continuing to arrest, torture, sexually abuse, and imprison democratic and leftist political activists. But at the sight of the Brothers taking an openly anti-revolutionary position, the revolutionaries broke into the chant, “No Brotherhood, no officers.”

During this same period, the Muslim Brotherhood seemed to consolidate its hold on the levers of what was at the time projected to be a new political order based upon a new provisional constitution. Taking advantage of its large, disciplined organization and lavish funding from Qatar, and not hesitating to slander its opponents as anti-Islamic, the Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party garnered a large victory in the parliamentary elections last winter. When the final votes were tallied in January, Freedom and Justice had won 47 percent of the vote, while the utterly reactionary Salafists had won 24 percent, the latter with substantial financial support from Saudi Arabia. Liberal parties scored a total of only 16 percent, while the left was shut out almost completely. This marked the low point of the Egyptian revolution, as it now appeared that Egypt was heading for a transition toward some kind of amalgam of Islamist conservatism and the old state apparatus under SCAF.

At this point, however, the Brotherhood began to overreach. Rather than form even a token alliance with the small secular wing of the new parliament, it tacitly allied with the Salafists, granting them leadership of committees on human rights and on culture and the media. It also betrayed its promises regarding the Egyptian presidency. In early 2011, the Brotherhood had stated repeatedly that it would not seek a political monopoly even if it had the votes to do so, intimating that it would back the candidacy of a well-known liberal democrat like Mohamed El Baradei, popular among the revolutionary youth as well. But on March 21, 2012, the Brotherhood went back on that promise, announcing that it would run one of its own for president, this while still controlling both parliament and the committee to write the constitution.

At this point, the military leaders of SCAF saw an opening for themselves. After all, they and their close allies still controlled the state, including the organization of the elections and the counting of the votes. Election judges loyal to SCAF thereupon disqualified the candidacy of a charismatic leader of the Brotherhood, forcing them to run the dour Mohamed Morsi. They also disqualified a prominent Salafist. Meanwhile, the military quietly backed the candidacy of former Air Force officer Ahmad Shafiq, who ran on ferocious “law and order” platform, promising to silence by overwhelming force the disorderly demonstrations on Tahrir Square, while also stoking fears of an Islamist Egypt.

The first round of the presidential election, held on March 31, 2012, saw a big drop in support for the Muslim Brotherhood versus the parliamentary elections of only a few months earlier. While the Brotherhood’s Morsi came in first, he scored only 25 percent, way down from the Brotherhood’s parliamentary total of 47 percent in January. Shocking to many, and possibly due to a degree of election fraud, Shafiq placed second, with 24 percent. Another surprise lay in the new and surprising strength of leftists and progressives. Left-wing nationalist Hamdin Sabbahi, who had worked closely with the youthful protestors even before 2011, was just behind, with 21 percent of the vote. In addition, Abdel Moneim Aboul Foutou, a very liberal Islamist with a progressive social agenda who had been pushed out of the Brotherhood, received 17 percent of the vote.

This outcome suggested that the broad Egyptian public had not turned into supporters of a conservative form of Islamism and that they were also open to progressive and leftist politics. After all, the combined vote for Sabbahi and Abdel Foutou was no less than 38 percent, with Sabbahi besting the Brotherhood in some of Cairo’s poorest neighborhoods, which he and Abdel Foutou also did in Alexandria. In short, the Egyptian revolution remained in play.

As voters awaited the final round for the presidency between the Brotherhood’s Morsi and the military-backed Shafiq, it was now the military’s turn to overreach. Judges close to SCAF disbanded parliament, leaving the pro-

cess of creating a new constitution in utter limbo. SCAF also arrogated vast new powers to itself, suggesting that it, rather than voters or the new president, would nominate a new constituent assembly.

On June 8, another very large demonstration filled Tahrir Square. All opposed what amounted to a coup by the military, with some giving critical support to Morsi and others shouting slogans against both Morsi and Shafiq. Eventually, Morsi won a fairly narrow victory against Shafiq, 52 percent to 48 percent. At one level, this was a shocking and retrogressive outcome. Shocking because an open supporter of the old regime received nearly half of the vote. Retrogressive because the political openings of 2011 had been reduced, in this final round at least, to a choice between two conservatives.

But at another level, this presented an opening. Both the military and the Muslim Brotherhood had discredited themselves, plus they were now at odds with each other, giving an opening to the revolutionary forces. Whereas their cooperation during 2011 and early 2012 had almost completely closed out any type of progressive politics, the sharp new divergences between them may now have created openings for leftists and progressive forces.

During the past year, two other indicators showed the obstacles facing the Egyptian revolution. One indicator of the deep challenges facing the Egyptian revolution is the state of labor. Tellingly, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions was founded just as Mubarak was being overthrown. Many strikes broke out soon after, with not only economic demands, but also calls for firing corrupt and oppressive bosses, many of whom were pushed out. But by late 2011, SCAF promulgated a new labor law that criminalized strikes that disturbed production, in other words almost all strikes. Penalties included prison sentences and stiff fines. A draft labor law proposed by the Muslim Brotherhood was little better.

A second indicator of deep contradictions since 2011 involved women's rights, so often a bellwether of where a revolution is going. On November 25 of last year, a monster demonstration drew at least 500,000 to Tahrir Square, demanding the resignation of the SCAF in favor of a government of national salvation involving all the nation's political forces. As these protests persisted into December, the military police cracked down. On December 17, soldiers accosted and stripped several women demonstrators, and one of these women was videoed being kicked on the ground by two male soldiers who had torn off her blouse. After the "blue bra" video went viral on the Internet, 10,000 women came onto the streets to demonstrate three days later, on December 20. This constituted the largest women's rights demonstration in modern Egyptian history, larger than the historic women's demonstration of 1919 against British imperialism.

Other women who had been arrested in various demonstrations also came forward to lodge legal complaints against sexual assaults by soldiers or military doctors, dubbed "virginity tests," which had been going on all through

2011, in fact continuing a practice begun by Mubarak's police. While the courts initially allowed these cases to go forward, by March of this year the cases were dismissed.

Despite this, Egyptian women have continued to protest with great courage in the face of ongoing sexual assaults in broad daylight in Tahrir Square, not only by the police and military, but also by male civilians. For example, a dozen women came to the June 8 demonstration against what amounted to SCAF's coup, but their target was the sexual assaults in Tahrir Square that have made it so difficult for women to participate in demonstrations there. Even though they had several dozen male escorts, their small group of fifty was driven off Tahrir almost immediately, under a shower of rocks and bottles. Feminists suspect that at least some of these sexual attacks have been orchestrated by the military-security apparatus, which has long employed thugs to attack protestors, and which targeted women in this way at demonstrations in the years leading up to 2011. But even if this is the case, how was a group of progressive women and their supporters driven off Tahrir Square in the midst of a demonstration that had an overall revolutionary character?

This points to a problem we noted in our earlier analysis of the Egyptian revolution, even at the height of its revolutionary creativity, when millions flocked to and occupied Tahrir Square day and night:

One youth in the square, Amira Magdy, declared, "We don't need a leader. This system is beautiful" (Kareem Fahim and Mona El-Naggar, "Some Fear a Street Movement's Leaderless Status May Become a Liability," *New York Times*, February 4, 2011). Such skepticism about a leader from on high was certainly warranted, especially given Egypt's history of military rulers, but it begged the question of what to do about the fact that some groups like the Army and the Muslim Brotherhood—not to speak of remnants of Mubarak's National Democratic Party—were already organized, had their agendas, and would sooner or later seek to project those agendas, something they would be able to do all the more easily if the more grassroots, secular, and leftist elements of the revolution did not themselves develop a stronger organizational presence in Egyptian society. (Kevin Anderson, "Arab Revolutions at the Crossroads," April 2, 2011, *The International Marxist-Humanist*)

LIBYA AND SYRIA

I can only touch very briefly here on the two other major revolutions in the region, Libya and Syria. In Libya, the long and bloody process of overthrowing the Qaddafi regime took more than six months, even with significant air support from NATO. The regime's intransigence to the end meant that the old state had to be destroyed. The extent to which the revolution succeeded as a result of NATO intervention has been hotly debated on the Left, but some of the more astute commentators—like Stephen Zunes and Juan Cole—

have emphasized that Libyan forces might have won anyway without the foreign assistance. Moreover, these same observers have argued that the endgame of the uprising, the fall of the capital, Tripoli, in August 2011 was more the product of an internal mass uprising than of an invasion by the military forces of the uprising. As Cole put it, “working-class districts rose up, in the hundreds of thousands and just threw off the regime” (cited in Zunes, “Lessons and False Lessons from Libya,” *truth-out.org*, Aug. 30, 2011).

What will replace the murderous, totalitarian Qaddafi regime is still unclear. So far, some regional militia leaders that fought Qaddafi have turned into warlords, who have dominated some areas of the country. This has led to sometimes-arbitrary revenge killings and persecutions of real or perceived regime supporters. Most tragically, some of these attacks have targeted Black Libyans or foreign workers, accused simply on the basis of their skin color or national origin or having fought in the regime’s African Legion. In addition, Libyan women have often been shunted aside, despite their crucial participation in the uprising, both by these warlords and sometimes by the provisional governing authorities.

But the situation is still in flux, and there have been a number of positive developments as well. The first post-revolutionary elections, held in July 2012, seem to have given the country more of a sense of national identity and unity. Turnout was relatively high, and little of the threatened violence from regional warlords actually took place. Moreover, unlike much of the rest of the region, liberal rather than Islamist parties like the Muslim Brotherhood may have won a plurality, putting them in a strong position to influence the new constitution.

In addition, some ethno-linguistic minorities like the Imazhigen (Berbers) have achieved an important degree of autonomy, more than anywhere else in the region. Under Qaddafi, people could be imprisoned for even speaking Tamazight (Berber) in public, but since the uprising they have been able to establish a Tamazight TV station. In addition, most Libyans seem to feel a sense of greater freedom and remain optimistic about the future.

Overall, the Libyan revolution stands out as the only example in the current Arab revolutionary wave of an oil-rich country, whose rulers were able to use oil money for a nearly limitless supply of weapons and mercenaries to use them, and yet still succumbed to a popular uprising. This surely holds lessons for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies, a base of counter-revolutionary politics in the region. The Libyan revolution also exposed contradictions within the international left, some of which, including prominent figures like Hugo Chávez, backed Qaddafi to the end, claiming this megalomaniacal dictator as a progressive because he had sometimes clashed with Western imperialism. At a more general level, Libya, and then Syria, to which I now turn, also called into question the way in which many on the

left, for example Tariq Ali, had attempted, early on when only Tunisia and Egypt had risen up, to portray the Arab revolutions as directed solely against regimes backed by Western imperialism.

Syria offers another example of an Arab revolution that has been forced to take up arms in the face of violent repression, and one that also tests and exposes contradictions on the left, as the Assad regime has long opposed both Israel and U.S. imperialism. This has led to misguided support for Assad from some prominent international leftists like Chávez. Inside the region, the regime continues to receive support not only from the Shia fundamentalist Hezbollah in Lebanon, but also from ostensibly leftist currents like the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which the Assad regime has sometimes backed in its fight against Turkish domination of the Kurds. Another leftist group that has supported Assad is the Syrian-based splinter group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Since March 2011, when mass protests began in one of the country's most impoverished regions, the Syrian regime has killed some 16,000 civilians and imprisoned (and often tortured) as many as 200,000 more. The revolutionary movement is broadly based, ranging from liberal and leftist youth to hardline Islamists. By now, it is said to exercise at least partial control, at least at night, of some 60 percent of the national territory. As with Egypt or Tunisia during their uprisings of early 2011, the revolutionary activists inside the country have worked scrupulously to keep a sense of unity on a national-democratic basis rather than a sectarian ethnic or religious one.

As reported by French novelist Jonathan Littell, who made a clandestine trip to rebel-controlled areas a few months ago, one youthful activist had this response to his question about fundamentalist influence. Littell's interlocutor began by referring to the failed Muslim Brotherhood uprising in Hama in 1982, which began on a sectarian basis with the killing of a group of military cadets of Alawite origin, that is, from the breakaway Shia religious grouping of the Assad family and many of its closest supporters: "Today, as against Hama in 1982, it is the people that is rising up. The Muslim Brothers, the communists, the Salafists and the other political movements are rushing to capture the people and stand on their shoulders. But the Syrian street opposes the politicization of the movement. It accepts aid from wherever it comes, but this aid cannot come with strings. The street has not risen up to demand a particular political option, but in response to oppression and humiliation" ("Passage Clandestin," *Le Monde*, Feb. 16, 2012). Whether this kind of politics can be maintained, in the face of both the regime's sectarian brutality and the lessons of Egypt, remains to be seen.

If the Syrian revolutionary movement has sought to overcome the nation's ethnic divisions, the regime has played the ethno-religious card, attempting to scare its Alawite base, as well as the Christians, the Kurds, and the Druze by arguing that the revolution (which they term "terrorism") will

bring about domination by fundamentalists from the Sunni Muslim majority, who constitute about 75 percent of the population. The regime's thugs, many of them drawn from the Alawite community, have targeted Sunni neighborhoods, carrying out brutal massacres. So far, the revolutionary movement has held to a great extent to disciplined, humanist stance, not only stopping reprisals against Alawite civilians, but also going to great length to highlight the fact that supporters of the revolution come from all ethnic groups and religious communities. At the same time, however, some sectarian and jihadist elements have entered the fray against the Assad regime, raising the danger of an ethno-religious war.

The July 18 bombing that killed a number of top officials of the Assad regime will not in itself alter the course of events, as leaders like these can be replaced, but it is an important sign of the regime's underlying weakness in the face of mass popular unrest.

Above all, the Syrian uprising shows that the Arab revolutions are ongoing, despite the many setbacks and contradictions that have arisen since 2011. Many different forces, among them a secular left, are contending with each other in a vast regional revolution that has yet to run its course.

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Chapter Seventeen

Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy for a Socialist Society

A Manifesto

Peter McLaren

Today during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we know that corporations are reaping huge profits but they are not spending their profits to hire workers or build factories but to enhance their own share prices. In contrast to this reality, we all live with a certain image that is constantly being embellished: that we live in a meritocracy where we are rewarded fairly for our hard work and perseverance. Hagiographers of American life surely will describe the first decade of the twenty-first century as a decade of disaster piled upon disaster. The misery of everyday life in capitalist society comes for many in the form of a pink slip or a home foreclosure notice. As critical educators, we search for a reprieve. We know from the alienation and suffering that has afflicted humanity for centuries that history can never be trusted to bend one particular way or another. Our purpose as revolutionary educators has never been to trust history, or whatever prophetic insights we believe we have pertaining to the future of humankind, but to understand history's movement and give it direction and momentum in the interests of social justice. Viewed from any point within the socio-historical panorama of despair that now confronts us, such a task seems more daunting than ever. Besotted by ideological belligerence, capitalism relies to a greater extent today than ever before on ideological rationalizations and obfuscation to defuse and deflect criticism of its recent developments.

When we look around us at the age in which we live, we see a ruling class with an unimaginably dense accumulation of wealth undertaking innumerable efforts to establish new organizations to reproduce the same social prac-

tices. Those who control capital control the government, forcing governments to become part of a corporate superstructure, overseeing capital's base. And there has been an accompanying corporate colonization of civil society as well, effectively stifling any ameliorative function that might be offered by many new educational movements, those very pragmatic organizations that have become a more capital-friendly substitute for revolutionary manifestos of groups bent on overthrowing the regime of capital.

Those of us who have to sell our labor-power for a wage remain ensepulchured by the realities of the global meltdown and the militarization of the country. The poor are left to face the organized burden of being American in the paradise created by the rich and for the rich.

The attempt by the Right to exorcise the insinuation of too much diversity into the U.S. Anglosphere, and the mass media's long-imposed separation between dialectical thought and everyday life have united to bring about a terrifying calcification of the public mind that has turned politics into a circus of pantomime, and has helped to secure both political parties as organs of interest for the corporations, which have become the servo-mechanisms of the corporate state.

It is the daily taunt of many on the Right that socialism leads to mindless conformity. But what could be gloomier than the politics that has arisen out of the ashes of bourgeois capitalist democracy? The word *socialism* is disparaged in the United States, and rather than socialism being an unsettled question, it is used as an unsettling noun, intended to frighten and to create panic among the popular majorities. The Left has yet to overcome this obstacle.

The cataclysmic social and political changes of this present historical moment have unleashed the most unholy aspirations among the modern Manicheans of the Christian Right. The Tea Party, the prehensile tail of libertarianism, has made a vertiginous descent into the bowels of the American Armageddon psyche, resurrecting itself in the gratuitous sepulchral cant of Christian dominionism and reconstructionism. Armed with a message that is an eerie amalgam of generalized resentment, a nympholepsy of self-hatred, and nativism sutured together by theocratic aspirations, these activists are clawing their way towards the New Jerusalem with their rabble rousing war-cry of dismantling the federal government. Television personality and Republican necromancer Glenn Beck makes a messianic overture to masses of Tea Party supporters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, while at the same time immolating the historical memory of the civil rights movement, by claiming Martin Luther King, Jr., as his forebear. In an atmosphere of big-tent religious revivalism dripping with a fascist miasma of national rebirth, a furor of white backlash zealotry, political demagoguery, fear-engendering and resentment-mongering, he grandly asserts that the civil rights movement was not really about black people, but rather about white conservatives under assault from evil liberals.

As advocates of revolutionary critical pedagogy, we stand at the turning point in this process. Critical pedagogy is an approach that we have chosen as a necessary (albeit insufficient) vehicle for transforming the world. The work that we do has been adapted from the pathfinding contributions of the late Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whose development of pedagogies of the oppressed helped to lay the foundations for approaches (feminist, post-structuralist, Marxist) to teaching and learning that utilizes the life experience of students in and outside of traditional classrooms to build spaces of dialogue and dialectical thinking. We have renamed our pedagogy, revolutionary critical pedagogy. We have done so because we believe that dialogical approaches to teaching can help to create a critical citizenry capable of analyzing and transforming capitalist societies worldwide. In doing so, we denounce the domesticated versions of critical pedagogy that are insufficiently critical of capitalism and even hostile to a socialist alternative.

Critical pedagogy has been discredited by the Right as administering propaganda for a communist insurrection, or it has been domesticated by those on the Left who do not want directly to challenge capital and state power. But critical pedagogy as a revolutionary praxis has never been extinguished. Like a burning ember, it can be stamped out by the jackboots of fascism, as is happening today, or rekindled to serve as a funeral pyre for the colonialist regime we are bound to serve as citizens of capital.

We are so reverentially preoccupied with what others have to say about the struggle for socialism that we fear to trust our own understanding and consequently we have no eyesight left to look upon these historical events themselves. Marx's writings that tell us untraditional truths about the social and economic order tap a world-weary longing that stretches back through the centuries. Here the term "world-weary longing" is not meant to refer to the existential despair often experienced by intellectuals as fathomless as the abysses of the earth. We are talking about the anguish that accompanies what have been for the majority of humanity the failures of attempting to overcome necessity. Current struggles to overcome oppression anchored to liberal appeals to fairness and equality and built upon the crusted-over sediments of past choices—even those made with considerable autonomy—are no longer relevant to the present day.

Critical pedagogy teaches us that we have the collective power to overcome the inimical forces of capital. The Promised Land can promise only to be a place of struggle, springing up where hope is conjugated with the movements of the people toward an anti-capitalist future. We are all merely seeds in the moist soil of the counter-world. It is up to us to decide what that world is to look like and how to get there.

We need to extend the ambit of critical pedagogy from persons with "authority," to whom, by convention and precept education has hitherto been confined, to those who are "least" among us, not in numbers, surely, but in

social legitimacy—the poor and the dispossessed. We are not talking about the dispossessed as dispossessed, but as a revolutionary force for socialism. They are carrying a much larger freight than their single selves. It is in their name that we begin to fathom that which we have been formed to be, and begin the arduous and painful process of remaking ourselves in a deliberately new way that often takes us on a collision course with the systems of intelligibility, ways of knowing, and received terms that we have inherited to create habitual and resigned agents.

The fact is, surely, that we are faced with two choices about how to live our humanity—the liberal model of pleading with corporations to temper their cruelty and greed, and the reactionary model that has declared war on social and economic equality. And on the evidence that each of these models is fiercely and hopelessly entangled in each other's conflictual embrace, we can accept neither.

Critical pedagogy is more than throaty bursts of teacherly impropriety, more than enumerating in ironic detail the problems faced by the youth of today, more than hurling invective at government policies, but a sustained march towards a revolutionary consciousness and practice.

We must become more like the unknown sailor who tried to smash the statue of Napoleon's head with a brick during the days of the Paris Commune, or like the Iraqi journalist who threw his shoe at the head of President George W. Bush while Bush was standing tall before cameras of the transnational corporate media like a Texas version of the Vendome Column wrapped in a jock strap.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy questions the official, hegemonic view of ahistorical educational change, isolated from the capitalist social and productive relationships. As revolutionary critical educators, we need to understand how the dynamics of the capitalist system—its movement from global capitalism to transnational capital, for instance—has guided the meaning and purpose of educational reform and has impacted institutions and approaches with respect to what counts as educational change.

We follow Che's dialectical conception of education which is formed internally through analyzing the continuous contradictions of external influences on the life of individuals. We agree with Paulo Freire that dialogical pedagogy can achieve the kind of class consciousness necessary for a powerful social transformation. It also suggests that as we participate in an analysis of the objective social totality that we simultaneously struggle for a social universe outside the commodity form of labor. If we are to educate at all, we must educate for this! Statist socialism has collapsed and weighs heavier on the minds of the living with its inevitable decay into the oblivion of historical time. Libertarian socialism as well lies rotting on its deathbed, as capitalism continues to wreak its revenge, despite its present state of unprecedented crisis. Antisystemic movements of all shapes and stripes are still around, but

have for the most part, become domesticated into reformist shadows of their previous revolutionary selves, forming enfeebled and enfeebling popular fronts that fall like spent cartridges on the heels of any real challenge to capitalism.

Critical educators must take a stand, working for political or direct democracy, for the direct control of the political system by citizens, for economic democracy, for the ownership and direct control of economic resources by the citizen body, for democracy in the social realm by means of self-management of educational institutions and workplaces, and for the ecological justice that will enable us to reintegrate society into nature. The struggle for a new historic bloc built up by the working class will not be easy. If critical educational studies are to avoid being corralled into accepting the dominant ideology, or annexed to pro-capitalist forces among some on the Left, or transformed into a recruiting ground for liberal reform efforts, or even worse, turned into an outpost for reactionary populism, it will largely be due to our efforts as revolutionary critical educators.

We need to awaken from our dream into another dream, but one dreamt with open eyes, a collective dream that will take us out of the homogeneous, monumental, and chronological time of capital and beyond the consolatory pretensions of the bourgeoisie to create the “time of now” discussed so poignantly by Walter Benjamin—the time of the revolutionary. We need to capture the revolutionary fervor of the communards, whose battle-tested hearts managed, if only for a brief time, to dump the muck of ages into the sewers of history. It is precisely the socialist partisanship of critical pedagogy—not to the point of dogmatism or inflexibility—that reveals its power of critique. We need to reclaim the power of critique as the sword arm of social justice and not relinquish it. For in doing so we reclaim our humanity and the world.

Chapter Eighteen

The Communist Horizon

Jodi Dean

The term *horizon* marks a division. Understood specially, the horizon is the line dividing the visible, separating the earth from sky. Understood temporally, the horizon converges with loss in a metaphor for privation and depletion. The “lost horizon” suggests abandoned projects, prior hopes that have now passed away. Astrophysics offers a thrilling, even uncanny, horizon: the “event horizon” surrounding a black hole. The event horizon is the boundary beyond which events cannot escape. Although “event horizon” denotes the curvature in space/time effected by a singularity, it’s not much different from the spatial horizon. Both evoke a fundamental division that we experience as impossible to reach, and that we can neither escape nor cross.

I use *horizon* not to recall a forgotten future but to designate a dimension of experience that we can never lose, even if, lost in a fog or focused on our feet, we fail to see it. The horizon is Real in the sense of *impossible*—we can never reach it—and in the sense of *actual* (Jacques Lacan’s notion of the Real includes both these senses). The horizon shapes our setting. We can lose our bearings, but the horizon is a necessary dimension of our actuality. Whether the effect of a singularity or the meeting of earth and sky, the horizon is the fundamental division establishing where we are.

With respect to politics, the horizon that conditions our experience is communism. I get the term, “The Communist Horizon,” from Bruno Bosteels. In *The Actuality of Communism* Bosteels engages the work of Álvaro García Linera. García Linera ran as Evo Morales’s vice presidential running mate in the Bolivian Movement for Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (BMS-IPSP). He is the author of multiple pieces on Marxism, politics, and sociology, at least one of which was written while he served time in prison for promoting an armed uprising (before becoming vice president of Bolivia, he fought in the Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army).

Bosteels quotes García Linera's response to an interviewer's questions about his party's plans following their electoral victory: "The general horizon of the era is communist."¹ García Linera doesn't explain the term. Rather, as Bosteels points out, García Linera invokes the communist horizon "as if it were the most natural thing in the world," as if it were so obvious as to need neither explanation nor justification. He assumes the communist horizon as an irreducible feature of the political setting. "We enter the movement with our expecting and desiring eyes set upon the communist horizon." For García Linera *communism* conditions the actuality of politics.

Some of the Left dismiss the communist horizon as a lost horizon. For example, in a post-modern pluralist approach that appeals to many on the Left, the economists writing as J. K. Gibson-Graham reject communism, offering "post-capitalism" in its stead. They argue that descriptions of capitalism as a global system miss the rich diversity of practices, relations, and desires constituting yet exceeding the economy and so advocate "reading the economy for difference rather than dominance" (as if dominance neither presupposes or relies on difference).² In their view, reading for difference opens up new possibilities for politics as it reveals previously unacknowledged loci of creative action within everyday economic activities.

Gibson-Graham do not present Marxism as a failed ideology or communism as the fossilized remainder of an historical experiment gone horribly wrong. On the contrary, they draw inspiration from Marx's appreciation of the social character of labor. They engage Jean-Luc Nancy's emphasis on communism as an idea that is the "index of a task of thought still and increasingly open."³ They embrace the reclamation of the commons. And they are concerned with neoliberalism's naturalization of the economy as a force exceeding the capacity of people to steer or transform it.

Yet at the same time, Gibson-Graham push away from communism to launch their vision of post-capitalism. Communism is that against which they construct their alternative conception of the economy. It's a constitutive force, present as a shaping of the view they advocate. For Gibson-Graham the term *capitalist* is not a term of critique or opprobrium; it's not part of a manifesto. The term is a cause of the political problems of the contemporary Left. They argue that the *discursive* dominance of capitalism embeds the Left in paranoia, melancholia, and moralism.

Gibson-Graham's view is a specific instance of a general assumption shared by leftists who embrace a generic post-capitalism but eschew a more militant anticapitalism. Instead of actively opposing capitalism, this tendency redirects anticapitalist energies into efforts to open up discussion and find ethical spaces for decision—and this in a world where one bond trader can bring down a bank in a matter of minutes.

I take the opposite position. The dominance of capitalism, the capitalist *system*, is material. Rather than entrapping us in a paranoid fantasy, an analy-

sis that treats capitalism as a global system of appropriation, exploitation, and circulation that enriches the few as it dispossesses the many *and* that has to expend an enormous amount of energy in doing so can anger, incite, and galvanize. Historically, in theory, and in practice, critical analysis of capitalist exploitation has been a powerful weapon in collective struggle. It persists as such today, in global acknowledgment about the excesses of neoliberal capitalism. As recently became clear in worldwide rioting, protest, and revolution, linking multiple sites of exploitation to narrow channels of privilege can replace melancholic fatalism with new assertions of will, desire, and collective strength. The problem of the Left hasn't been our adherence to a Marxist critique of capitalism. It's that we have lost sight of the communist horizon, a glimpse of which new political movements are starting to reveal.

Over the last decade a return to communism has re-energized the Left. Communism is again becoming a discourse and a vocabulary for the expression of universal, egalitarian, and revolutionary ideals. A vital area of radical philosophy considers communism a contemporary name for emancipatory, egalitarian politics and has been actively rethinking many of the concepts that form part of the communist legacy.

These ongoing theoretical discussions overlap with the changing political sequences marked by 1968 and 1989. They also overlap with the spread of neoliberal capitalist domination, a domination accompanied by extremes in economic inequality, ethnic hatred, and police violence, as well as by widespread militancy, insurgency, occupation, and revolution. The current emphasis on communism thus exceeds the coincidence of academic conferences calling specifically for communism's return with the new millennium's debt crises, austerity measures, increased unemployment, and overall sacrifice of the achievements of the modern welfare state to the private interests of financial institutions deemed too big to fail. Already in an interview in 2002, prior to his election to the Bolivian presidency, Evo Morales had announced that "the neoliberal system was a failure, and now it's the poor people's turn."⁴ Communism is reemerging as a magnet of political energy because it is and has been the alternative to capitalism.

The communist horizon is not lost. It is Real. As Bosteels argues, to invoke the communist horizon is to produce "a complete shift in perspective or a radical ideological turnabout, as a result of which capitalism no longer appears as the only game in town and we no longer have to be ashamed to set our expecting and desiring eyes here and now on a different organization of social relationships."⁵ With communism as our horizon, the field of possibilities for revolutionary theory and practice starts to change shape. Barriers to action fall away. New potentials and challenges come to the fore. Anything is possible.

Instead of a politics thought primarily in terms of resistance, playful and momentary aesthetic disruptions, the immediate specificity of local projects,

and struggles for hegemony within a capitalist parliamentary setting, the communist horizon impresses upon us the necessity to abolish capitalism and to create global practices and institutions of egalitarian cooperation. The shift in perspective the communist horizon produces turns us away from the democratic milieu that has been the form of the loss of communism as a name for left aspiration and toward the reconfiguration of the components of political struggle—in other words, away from general inclusion, momentary calls for broad awareness, and lifestyle changes, and toward militant opposition, tight organizational forms (party, council, working group, cell), and the sovereignty of the people over the economy through which we produce and reproduce ourselves.

The power of the return of communism stands or falls on its capacity to organize a large-scale collective struggle toward a goal. For over thirty years the Left has eschewed such a goal, accepting instead liberal notions that goals are strictly individual life-style choices or social-democratic claims that history already solved basic problems of distribution with the compromise of regulated markets and welfare states—a solution the Right rejected and capitalism destroyed. The Left failed to defend a vision of a better world, an egalitarian world of common production by and for the collective people. Instead, it accommodated capital, succumbing to the lures of individualism, consumerism, competition, and privilege, and proceeding as if there really were no alternative to states that rule in the interest of markets.

Marx expressed the basic principle of the alternative over a hundred years ago: from each according to ability, to each according to need. This principle contains the urgency of the struggle for its own realization. We don't have to continue to live in the wake of left failure, stuck in the repetitions of crises and spectacle. In light of the planetary climate disaster and the ever-intensifying global class war as states redistribute wealth to the rich in the name of austerity, the absence of a common goal is the absence of a future. The premise of communism is that collective determination of collective conditions is possible if we want it.

The communist horizon appears closer than it has in a long time. The illusion that capitalism works has been shattered by all manner of economic and financial disaster—and we see it everywhere. The fantasy that democracy exerts a force for economic justice has dissolved as the U.S. government funnels trillions of dollars to banks and the European central banks rig national governments and cut social programs in order to keep themselves afloat. With our desiring eyes set on the communist horizon, we can now get to work on collectively shaping a world that we already make in common.

NOTES

From Jodi Dean's "Introduction" to *The Communist Horizon* (London: Verso, 2012).

1. Bruno Bosteels, *The Actuality of Communism* (London: Verso, 2011), p. 236.
2. J. K. Gibson-Graham, *A Post-Capitalist Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 59.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
4. Evo Morales, "Interview with Evo Morales," Yvonne Zimmermann, *The Commoner*, July 7, 2002 [Original site, commoner.org.uk/morales1.htm, not available; the article can be viewed at <http://www.all4all.org/2002/07/126.shtml>].
5. Bosteels, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

Conclusion

The Commonwealth Counter-Offensive

Charles Reitz

Once again fateful crises of U.S. wars and of the global capitalist system are upon us. The accumulation of private wealth and property does not lead to self-actualization and fulfillment, as the neoliberal business utopians have asserted, but to delusions of grandeur on the part of the current Masters of the Universe on Wall Street and to the destruction of the political-economic system under their command. The Wall Street and the European banking elites today are increasingly being told: just because you stole it, doesn't mean you own it—to borrow a phrase from Lloyd C. Daniel. The global economy's intensifying inequalities have led to a reconsideration of who produces and who appropriates, who benefits, who is hurt.

A commonwealth counter-offensive is the political challenge today. Under system duress, continuing allegiances to crumbling structures of power will be seen as fatally misguided, because they entail real material loss and suffering; they can and will swiftly shift. The fundamental role of the labor process in the sustenance of the human community, on the other hand, is a lodestone not to be disparaged or displaced, even if the labor force is being dehumanized and degraded. Socialism has the power to reclaim our common humanity. Its “radical” goal is decommodification: public work for the public good. This involves sensuous living labor authentically actualizing itself through humanist activism and creativity—humanity remaking itself through a social labor process in accordance with the commonwealth promise at the core of our material reality.

Herbert Marcuse's definition of Marxist socialist humanism was provided above: “In the Marxian conception, socialism is humanism in as much as it organizes the social division of labor, the ‘realm of necessity’ so as to enable

men to satisfy their social and individual needs without exploitation and with a minimum of toil and sacrifice.” As Marcuse saw it in the late 1960s, a new, more generalized, type of communism in Europe—“Eurocommunism”—was being fueled by an ascendant intercultural anti-capitalist counter-consciousness that “negated the *reification* which veiled the real mechanism of domination” (Marcuse 1979, 23). Critical clarity had come to the striking workers and students of Paris 1968. In 1979 Marcuse asked: “Can there still be any mystification of who is governing and in whose interests, of what is the base of their power” (Ibid.)? The dominant European and American political tendencies at that time were tending to the right, but the development of Eurocommunism, which had much in common with the broadly activist socialist humanism of Marcuse, meant that the rightward drift was “meeting an enlarged opposition” (Ibid.).

A massive crisis is also a massive opportunity for education and action. The purpose of this collection has been to generate discussion and activism especially among college students and teachers in several interrelated social science disciplines—sociology, economics, business ethics, labor education, history, in the spirit of the most radical components of Herbert Marcuse’s critical social theorizing.

Political activism has been emphasized by authors in *Crisis and Commonwealth* in several crucial and diverse proposals. These will be summarized below in a series of excerpts and echoes from the foregoing chapters. The political voices represented here are all to the left of center, and range from radically democratic to explicitly socialist/communist. My work as editor has been grounded in Herbert Marcuse’s philosophy of labor, a perspective that I call *critical work*, because it penetrates beneath empirical economic facts and discerns generative economic and labor structures that are neither obvious nor apparent. Critical reasoning and analysis have formulated an alternative vision for labor grounded in a critical theory of work, wealth, and the historical human condition. The *politics of critical work* begins with an understanding of the legitimacy of this philosophy of labor as the foundation upon which to develop strategy and tactics on a number of fronts that can also be coordinated into a proto-revolutionary movement tending toward socialism’s most radical goals. The *critical work of politics* stems of course from Marcuse’s Great Refusal and *reality-based* utopianism, Marx’s eleventh Feuerbach thesis (while philosophers continue to interpret the world, the most important thing is to *change* it), and McLaren’s *manifesto* to reclaim our humanity and the world.

Peter Marcuse has outlined a strategy in Chapter 2 of moving toward *socialism one sector at a time*. If revolution in its classic form is unlikely to take place all at once, its goals might best be approached strategically piece by piece, built on those elements of the existing system that already rested on socialist-aspects. Spaces of Hope exist for socialist political action, as in the

housing sector, for example, where cooperatives, land trusts, public ownership, and mutual housing associations raise the question of whether the for-profit market is really the best way to allocate housing, one of the necessities of life. Similarly anti-capitalist alternatives in education, health care, and even the financial sector, raise the option of an aggressive posture that would not only defend the existing islands of non-commodified production but call for their expansion. This would deepen the debate: to go from private vs. public, to open up the socialist vs. capitalist choice, is that far-fetched? In practice, it would mean a kind of progressive economics of decommodification and liberation from market dependency, moving towards socialism one sector at a time.

Herbert Marcuse's as yet insufficiently appreciated analysis of the crisis-generating features of the commodified labor process was discussed in Chapters 1 and 12. So too was the power of labor to liberate itself from commodification and exploitation and make commonwealth the human condition. Marcuse knew that because capitalism exists, so too does exploitation, and that *system change* is necessary and *possible* if we comprehend and refuse the system. He stressed that system change requires a twofold refusal: of its mode of production and the repressive satisfactions that replicate it. Over the last several decades there has been a regression in the comprehensiveness and materiality of critical theory. Returning to Marcuse's work filled-in some of the key and notable economic deficits of contemporary forms of cultural commentary stemming from postmodern literary, aesthetic, and political theory. Marcuse not only described the obscenities of global inequality, domination, alienation, and war in an extraordinarily vivid and effective manner, more importantly, his writing evokes labor solidarity among subaltern groups across traditional barriers of culture. He elucidated the social change strategy of building united fronts to help labor reclaim its humanist promise with important implications for intercultural/multicultural organizational development. Marcuse was also aware that critical theory needed to be *taught*, utilizing the experiences of the exploited and oppressed, through dialogue and dialectical thinking, to analyze the objective social totality and real possibilities for the future. Hence the need for revolutionary critical pedagogy as well as political education through an analysis of cultural history, natural history, and our human potentials in the liberal arts and sciences.

Marcuse tied his labor theory of humanism also to Marx's historical and dialectical theory of socialist revolution as having the *singular purpose* of labor's supersession of "capitalist commodity production." He likewise honored Marx's philosophical humanism as "the foundation of historical materialism." He repeatedly identifies a genuine concept of communism with a humanist worldview, and that the alienation theory articulated there by Marx looks to the supersession of alienation through the actualization of the human essence. Marcuse and Marx asserted a radically materialist conception of the

essence of socially active human beings. As I formulated this above: seen from the outside, we are the ensemble of our social relations; seen from the inside, we are *sensuous living labor*.

As an extension of his humanist philosophy of labor, Marcuse reclaimed elements of the classical philosophical traditions in order to confront the culture of finance capital with an immanent critique of its own philistinism and provincialism. His phrase, the “Great Refusal,” crystallized his call for a systems-level analysis of social forces and social structures and the determinate negation(s) of them. Like Lukács and Marx before him, Marcuse sought not only refusal, but also a concrete philosophy that could envision from the conditions of the present intelligent choices about real possibilities for our future.

Steve Spartan and I presented an analysis of the income accounts for the U.S.A. which has demonstrated that incomes are structurally determined, and that structural, that is socialist, changes to the economy (e.g., decommodification of the labor process and production, expropriation of the expropriators) can reconfigure the patterns of wealth creation and distribution in accordance with the radical goals of equality and justice. Such changes are really *possible*, and *not only* possible; they are *feasible*: worldwide we have a system ripe with abundance, yet obsolete economic mechanisms—based on ownership or non-ownership of private property—are driving most of humanity, the labor force internationally, to its knees. The Marxist conceptions of *wage-labor* and *commodity fetishism* are the key analytical criteria that measure the underlying dehumanization and commercialization of education and life itself under capitalism. Abolition of these phenomena will be the hallmark of humanist advancement in society and culture. Critical philosophy and radical pedagogy must theorize the origins and outcomes of economic and cultural oppression, and be engaged politically with the labor force to end them. To liberate the fullest potential of any critical theory of society this must be its logic and manifesto.

Our vision of re-humanized social action and social ownership is a mature philosophy of human freedom and fulfillment grounded in the human capacities of sensuous living labor. Authentic freedom is ours when we grasp intellectually and hold politically the resources that we have produced, and which can be possessed by all, within a de-commodified and re-humanized world. We emphasized the transformation of commodified human labor into *public work*, i.e., work that aims at the public good rather than private accumulation. Work in the public interest in the public sector expands areas of the economy traditionally considered the public domain, the public sphere, the commonwealth: social needs oriented projects like libraries, parks, utilities, the media, telephone service, postal service, transportation, and social services.

The analytical innovations that Steve Spartan and I have presented above can be regarded as Marcusean insofar as they embody a form of the “Great Refusal,” and disclose truths about our human condition and our human potential that are absent from established patterns of academic and political discourse. We have attempted to do this in our discussions of the intensifying inequalities in the social distribution of income and wealth, rival interpretations of the meaning of inequality, the implications of the labor theory of value for wealth accumulation, ownership, and justice, and finally, the 2008 financial crises of over-accumulation and capital valorization in the U.S.

Fred Whitehead, a long-time labor advocate and radical, has called for a strategic new political-economic *offensive*. In his estimation “while the Right wing has had strategic plans in place since before Reagan became President, the Left has failed to come up with anything that can take them on. Failure to have a strategy at all means failure in the long run, and often in the short run too.” His words are perhaps chilling, but also indispensable for the future success: “Any person or team that only has a defense is doomed to defeat eventually. In part, lacking an offense, you don’t ever score any points. Also, if you are only defensive, your opponent on the offensive not only has the momentum, but he can study your defense and pick out the weaknesses in it. In a purely defensive strategy, however good that may be, there is, then, an inherent weakness. Of course, in any sport, great defense is critically important. And having a poorly designed or executed offense has its perils as well.” Similarly, Kevin Anderson has stressed that the Left (in the Middle East and elsewhere) needs greater cohesion and sense of purpose. *Charter 2000*, as we have seen, aims to provide just such a comprehensive political platform.

David Brodsky’s essay on *Charter 2000* as a transitional program for the work force today, presented what he called a *counter-offensive* against the War on Labor. “It is in the interest of all people who must work for a living, and those dependent on them—in other words, everyone except the privileged classes—to mount a counter-offensive against the intensified assault on labor now occurring around the world.” He described *Charter 2000* as an eclectic mixture of reformist and radical ideas providing a common ground political platform serving as “a proposal for labor to make gains, rather than preserve its status quo.” *Charter 2000*’s core is a highly detailed program for what will doubtless still be a long term project of discussion and organization as we start to rethink the shape of human society. Its compendium of universal rights and entitlements helps us re-imagine labor’s humanist future. *Charter 2000* is unique among U.S. progressive platforms and programs in its focus on universal human rights, especially social, economic, and cultural rights, which are excluded from the U.S. constitution and slighted in statutory law. It is also unique in its insistence that U.S. democracy expand to embrace

these universal human rights, which it calls democratic outcomes, and that they be guaranteed through constitutional amendments.

David Brodsky advises that: “*Charter 2000*[’s]. . . ‘Preamble’ reads: ‘We prefer flexibility: any strategy that furthers the broad progressive transformation of American society is a good one. There are many effective ways of advancing progressive goals, ranging from educational efforts to testimony before public bodies, community and labor organizing, electoral and media campaigns, and actions in the streets (rallies, marches, demonstrations, picketing, and civil disobedience).’” On the strategy of winning new constitutional amendments guaranteeing rights—as Fred Whitehead’s “Vote for a Job” campaign envisioned and which was also proposed in *Charter 2000* in addition to a right to a living income regardless of employment status—the discussants formulating *Charter 2000* stressed that even successful amendments by themselves cannot secure implementation. Brodsky rightly admonishes: “Implementation will depend on a permanent, militant mass movement insisting on enforcement.”

Douglas Dowd, emeritus professor of economic history, pressed upon us a legitimate sense of urgency: “as the world now spins it increasingly becomes obvious that unless sane and decent people take over U.S. politics that our indecent politics will bring an end to life on earth.” Looking back to summer 2011 he recounts that “beginning on Wall Street, protests took hold throughout the nation.” As he wrote in late 2012 “the protests are beginning to take hold again. Three cheers for that, but we also need a *nationally coordinated movement* for the substantial improvement of all social problems and possibilities at home: and peace abroad.” He asked: “As the rich and powerful go about their dirty work, what should *we* be doing?” and he suggested that, for one thing, a campaign should be waged as a left within the Democratic Party focusing on six major issues: “the economy, inequality, big business, taxes, wars, and the environment. The ‘six’ interact and are interdependent; to rid ourselves of what’s harmful in any one of them, all must become substantially undone in ways to serve *all*, instead of a few.”

Henry Giroux takes up one of *Crisis and Commonwealth*’s key issue areas—schooling—as a political point of engagement, in addition to Dowd’s “six.” He makes a powerful case for critical pedagogy as a force against inequality and for social transformation. “In this conservative right-wing reform culture, the role of public education, if we are to believe the Heritage Foundation and the likes of Bill Gates–type billionaires, is to produce students who laud conformity, believe job training is more important than education, and view public values as irrelevant. Students in this view are no longer educated for democratic citizenship. On the contrary, they are now being trained to fulfill the need for human capital.”

Giroux remarks sharply that: “privatization, commodification, militarization and deregulation are the new guiding categories through which schools,

teachers, pedagogy and students are defined. The current assault on public education is not new but it is more vile and more powerful than in the past.” Teachers can spearhead a new social movement as a powerful force for critical consciousness and societal reconstruction. As he sees it: “Pedagogy is a mode of critical intervention, one that believes teachers have a responsibility to prepare students not merely for jobs, but for being in the world in ways that allow them to influence the larger political, ideological and economic forces that bear down on their lives.

“Schooling is an eminently political and moral practice, because it is both directive and actively legitimates what counts as knowledge, sanctions particular values and constructs particular forms of agency.” Teachers are being put on the defensive by neoliberal reformers in education like Michelle Rhee and others. Giroux, like Whitehead, stresses that the teacher corps needs to go on the offensive: “educators need to start with a project, not a method. They need to view themselves through the lens of civic responsibility and address what it means to educate students in the best of those traditions and knowledge forms we have inherited from the past, and also in terms of what it means to prepare them to be in the world as critically engaged agents.” This means that: “educators will have to focus their work on important social issues that connect what is learned in the classroom to the larger society and the lives of their students. Such issues might include the ongoing destruction of the ecological biosphere, the current war against youth, the hegemony of neoliberal globalization, the widespread attack by corporate culture on public schools, the dangerous growth of the prison-industrial complex, the ongoing attack on the welfare system, the increasing rates of incarceration of people of color, the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the rise of a generation of students who are laboring under the burden of debt and the increasing spread of war globally.” “[E]ducators need to do more than create the conditions for critical learning for their students; they also need to responsibly assume the role of civic educators willing to share their ideas with other educators and the wider public by writing for a variety of public audiences in a number of new media sites.”

Giroux is thoughtful about the teacher’s necessary political engagement, and suggests: “One useful approach to embracing the classroom as a political site, but at the same time eschewing any form of indoctrination, is for educators to think through the distinction between a politicizing pedagogy, which insists wrongly that students think as we do, and a political pedagogy, which teaches students by example and through dialogue about the importance of power, social responsibility and the importance of taking a stand (without standing still) while rigorously engaging the full range of ideas about an issue.” Further, “political education foregrounds education not within the imperatives of specialization and professionalization, but within a project designed to expand the possibilities of democracy by linking education to

modes of political agency that promote critical citizenship and address the ethical imperative to alleviate human suffering.” In sum: “[I]n opposition to the privatization, commodification, commercialization and militarization of everything public, educators need to define public education as a resource vital to the democratic and civic life of the nation.”

Patricia Pollock Brodsky presented an historical account, remarkably consonant with Giroux’s analysis and experience, of exactly how her higher education institution “faced a series of relentless attacks on academic freedom, faculty governance, and the public status of the university.” Her assessment of the ordeal is upbeat: “In response to this multi-pronged attempt to corporatize and privatize much of UMKC (the University of Missouri at Kansas City), faculty, students, and the community together mounted a successful defense of public higher education.” The details were these: “Threats to UMKC initially came from a group of local big businesses trying to gain access to public funds, particularly from research in the lucrative fields of health sciences and biotechnology.” The university’s chancellor advocated the neoliberal agenda of transformation and technology transfer: “Deals were floated to sell off part of the highly rated Dental School to a private company, and to transfer teacher training and degree granting from the School of Education to a private “Institute for Urban Education The biggest prize coveted by [the chancellor] Gilliland and her backers, however, was the biotech industry. UMKC, with its medical, dental, pharmacy and nursing schools and its large-grant-funded research-oriented School of Biological Science (SBS), seemed to offer a ready-made institutional framework.” The School of Biological Science, seeing itself as doing fundamental scientific research in the public interest, refused to be partnered with a private local institute that sought to commercialize and commodify its work. To defeat the chancellor’s agenda, “the faculty used a variety of strategies to realize the principles of informed resistance and outreach to all potential allies.” In the end the chancellor was felled by a vote of no confidence from within five of the university’s Schools. Brodsky said her account “has been written in the hope that the successes at UMKC can serve as an example of, if not an inspiration for, what can be accomplished through principled action and solidarity. To fight back, the academic workforce need not be unionized, or even have an AAUP chapter, though some organizational focus is necessary. Conditions since 2005 have worsened significantly in our society in general, and attacks continue on public higher education and on UMKC, but campus resistance and mobilization showed that victories are possible.”

John Marciano, like Henry Giroux, has also written about the need for civic literacy, civic activism, and social justice education. He raises the issue of whether a push for a left in the Democratic Party is a dead end. While there are definitely some progressives within the party to be supported, he believes past history has shown that at the national level the Democrats from

Wilson to Obama are “a criminal gang.” Herbert Marcuse would fundamentally agree, yet, as I noted in the Introduction, he also concedes (and here Dowd might well agree) that: “Radicalism has much to gain from the ‘legitimate’ protest against the war, inflation, and unemployment, from the defense of civil rights. . . . The ground for the building of a united front is shifting and sometimes dirty—but it is there.”

Arnold L. Farr’s essay on repressive and emancipatory education utilizes Jonathan Kozol’s *Savage Inequalities* to get at class and race issues. Kozol’s work documents the material inequalities in school resources, and of course unequal resources translate into unequal life chances for children in class and race terms. Farr shows how Kozol’s radical perspective investigates the causes of the underlying inequalities and injustices, while the liberalism of John Rawls’s famous theory of justice provides a deceptive ideological veil rendering the basic structure of society invisible. Emancipatory education requires an intellectual and historical re-contextualization of the facts with “what the facts have denied,” as Marcuse says, to build a multidimensional context for interpretation. Only this type of historical and multicultural learning can undergird radical political action for freedom and equality.

A final lesson from Farr’s essay is a reminder of the dangers of repressive tolerance. Here I would also build on one of Kevin Anderson’s insights warning against the destructive cultural toleration of misogyny in his overview of “Year Two of the Arab Revolutions.” Certainly sexism is an ongoing global phenomenon fueling violence against women that knows no class or ethnic boundaries: from Kansas City to India, to South Africa. Witness the world-wide records of sexual assaults, rapes and murders, genital mutilations, sex trafficking and sex slavery, against which the “V-Day” and “One Billion Rising” movements have campaigned and protested. Male-dominated cultural patterns must be replaced with patterns of partnership power: males must be liberated from misplaced aggression and any sense of entitlement in relations with women.

Poet and essayist Lloyd C. Daniel, a former elected state representative in the Missouri House, often reads his material at public arts events with jazz and hip hop inflections, but in the address transcribed here he turns seriously indignant: “We’ve gone down a military road to control the world. You can follow them if you want to, but Dr. King wouldn’t have. We can’t presume to know exactly what he would have said about what’s going on now, but we know what he said about Vietnam. If you read, you know what he said about the Congo, about South Africa. A third of his “Chaos or Community” book was about foreign policy and he points to how it’s not about democracy, it’s about protecting a handful of rich corporations, military interests and American arrogance, so they can somehow run the world, be policeman of the world and can’t run their own affairs. Oppress their own people.” Like Dr. King, Daniel admonishes the U.S. government: “Stop your invasions.

Stop your oppression of your own people. Then think about telling somebody else something. The United States of America does not have the right, wisdom or ability to run planet Earth. God is not dead. Dr. King in fact said he could hear God saying to America, ‘You’re too arrogant and if you don’t change your ways, I’ll rise up and break the backbone of your power and I’ll place it in the hands of a nation that doesn’t even know my name. Be still and know that I’m God.’”

Daniel emphasizes that most Black leaders at the time told MLK, Jr., “stay with civil rights Dr. King, don’t mix civil rights with foreign policy and the economic system. Don’t do that.” But Dr. King said, “I have to”—echoing the phrase of his famous namesake after posting his ninety five theses on the Church door at Wittenberg in 1517: “Ich kann nicht anders [I cannot do otherwise].”

Daniel stressed the radical nature of Dr. King’s political philosophy: “He said he couldn’t come out against violence in the ghettos, unless he came out against what he called, ‘the greatest purveyor of violence on planet Earth, my own government.’” He concludes: “The point is this, let us live Dr. King’s dream. Please don’t trivialize Dr. King. Please don’t make him into just another okey-doke handkerchief head Negro leader. If that were all he was, he’d be on one leg, sliding around the stage with his collar whipped backwards, collecting money now. He was much more than that.”—“They had to kill the brother.”

Alfred T. Kisubi has introduced us to the too little heralded philosophical and literary traditions of socialism and humanism in post-colonial Africa, providing a wealth of political leadership information for critical study. He also documented the secular African approach to cooperative economics, *Ujamaa*, and the traditional roots of labor cooperation and the moral power of partnership conduct that resonate deeply with views I have myself presented.

Peter McLaren’s writings on critical pedagogy have long been an inspiration to me and several of my colleagues, not to mention the many co-conspirators in the critical pedagogy movement far and wide. He stresses here that the radical approach to teaching that we have chosen is a necessary, yet certainly insufficient vehicle for transforming the world; nonetheless we can strengthen our work anew by emphasizing the intended societal impacts of our project with a militant manifesto proclaiming our practice as “revolutionary critical pedagogy for a socialist society.” He explains: “The work that we do has been adapted from the pathfinding contributions of the late Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, whose development of pedagogies of the oppressed helped to lay the foundations for approaches (feminist, post-structuralist, Marxist) to teaching and learning that utilize the life experience of students in and outside of traditional classrooms to build spaces of dialogue and dialectical thinking.” Today critical educators are faced with a heightened

political urgency: “The fact is, surely, that we are faced with two [loaded] choices about how to live our humanity—the liberal model of pleading with corporations to temper their cruelty and greed, and the reactionary model that has declared war on social and economic equality. And on the evidence that each of these models is fiercely and hopelessly entangled in each other’s conflictual embrace, we can accept neither.” McLaren makes the most fundamental of radical proposals: “as we participate in an analysis of the objective social totality that we simultaneously struggle for a social universe *outside the commodity form of labor*. If we are to educate at all, we must educate for this! McLaren is calling upon us to challenge, creatively and militantly, the prevailing forms of educational administration and pedagogical practice in the U.S. which ultimately *reproduce* the unequal social division of labor through the acceptance of wage labor and capital’s fetishism of commodities. These must no longer be taken as natural and normal—as both the overt economic function of education and the covert hidden curriculum of schools. Yet schools and society today are also confronting crises of institutional failure: the massive over-appropriation of GDP by elites dialectically translates into crises of non-reproduction for society’s laboring base.

This volume has repeatedly turned to Marx and Marcuse as crucial sources for a critical understanding of the commodification of life and learning. Liberation requires decommodification and social action consistent with standards of justice that are intercultural and humanistic. In this regard McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo published *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Toward a New Humanism* (2007) assessing the roots of the current crisis of U.S. capitalism in its ongoing imperialist (globalization) aspirations even before the 2000 financial debacle on Wall Street. McLaren’s piece in the present volume indicates his belief (and mine) that an explicitly socialist strategic offensive is indispensable for liberation. The socialist humanist nature of his manifesto is clear: “We need to reclaim the power of critique as the sword arm of social justice and not relinquish it. For in doing so we reclaim our humanity and the world.” McLaren in contradistinction to the united front strategic recommendation of Marcuse and others warns against “forming enfeebled and enfeebling popular fronts that fall like spent cartridges on the heels of any real challenge to capitalism.” So this aspect of strategy formation is an issue yet to be conclusively resolved.

In “The Communist Horizon” Jodi Dean introduces us to the radical perspectives of literary critic Bruno Bosteels (Cornell University) and the once-imprisoned revolutionary theorist, Álvaro García Linera, who subsequently became the Bolivian vice-president under Evo Morales. Dean acknowledges Bosteels as having brought Linera to her attention through his recent monograph, *The Actuality of Communism* (London: Verso, 2011). Bosteels quoted Linera’s fundamental thesis: “The general horizon of the era is communist.” Dean found this absolutely remarkable and elaborated:

“García Linera invokes the communist horizon ‘as if it were the most natural thing in the world,’ as if it were so obvious as to need neither explanation nor justification. He assumes the communist horizon as an irreducible feature of the political setting. ‘We enter the movement with our expecting and desiring eyes set upon the communist horizon.’ For García Linera *communism* conditions the actuality of politics.”

Dean explains her understanding of this “horizon” as having relevance both for the anti-communist Right as well as for the non-communist Left: “Communism is that against which they construct their alternative conception of the economy. It’s a constitutive force, present as a shaping of the view they advocate.” Speaking of a spate of new publications and conferences on radical social theory and practice, Dean comments: “Over the last decade a return to communism has re-energized the radical Left. Communism is again becoming a discourse and a vocabulary for the expression of universal, egalitarian, and revolutionary ideals. A vital area of philosophy considers communism a contemporary name for emancipatory, egalitarian politics and has been actively rethinking many of the concepts that form part of the communist legacy.” In her estimation, communism “is reemerging as a magnet of political energy because it is and has been the alternative to capitalism.” She is optimistic about revolutionary possibilities today: “As recently became clear in worldwide rioting, protest, and revolution, linking multiple sites of exploitation to narrow channels of privilege can replace melancholic fatalism with new assertions of will, desire, and collective strength. The problem of the Left hasn’t been our adherence to a Marxist critique of capitalism. It’s that we have lost sight of the communist horizon, a glimpse of which new political movements are starting to reveal.” “Instead of a politics thought primarily in terms of resistance, playful and momentary aesthetic disruptions, the immediate specificity of local projects, and struggles for hegemony within a capitalist parliamentary setting, the communist horizon impresses upon us the necessity to abolish capitalism and to create global practices and institutions of egalitarian cooperation.” Dean offers an exemplary form of offensive strategic thinking: “For over thirty years the Left has eschewed such a goal, accepting instead liberal notions that goals are strictly individual life-style choices or social-democratic claims that history already solved basic problems of distribution with the compromise of regulated markets and welfare states—a solution the Right rejected and capitalism destroyed In light of the planetary climate disaster and the ever-intensifying global class war as states redistribute wealth to the rich in the name of austerity, the absence of a common goal is the absence of a future. The premise of communism is that collective determination of collective conditions is possible if we want it. *The communist horizon appears closer than it has in a long time.*”

Inspired by Jodi Dean’s crucial contribution as well as the work of Zvi Tauber, I took up the material force and scope of *a labor theory of ethics and*

commonwealth in this volume's Chapter 12 as the larger political *reality* that encompasses all our engagement and action. I argued that a demythologizing and humanist reading of the history of ethical thought in the world's great wisdom traditions yields trans-historical insights. Humanity's oldest moral customs rooted in specific-historical conditions and practices, reflected communal ideals of sharing, cooperation, empathy, mutual regard, respect and reciprocity, partnership power, etc. These norms were themselves *practical*: aiming at the transformation and pacification of everyday tumult. Partnership practices and commonwealth customs, raised to a higher, ideal level as proverbs and principles, provided a critical negation of conflictual social realities. In non-religious and sociological terms: Life depends on labor. Labor occurs in social relationships; it is a communal project of social beings to meet human needs and promote human flourishing; social labor is the source of social wealth. The labor force, as a group, has the only legitimate right to the ownership of this wealth. Further, it has the power to reclaim it from any who have unjustly appropriated it.

Marcuse, Marx, and McLaren emphasized the underlying identity of communism, socialism, and humanism. Philosophical humanism was seen *not* as impossibly utopian and politically powerless, but the other way round: *practical* struggles for human dignity, respect, and empowerment, against infamous encroachments of man's inhumanity to man, have led to significant intercultural learning and social progress. The force of the material needs of sensuous living labor may, of course, be distorted by a mobilization of bias and/or subdued by the ongoing clash of class interests within the established capitalist order resorting to police state measures. The future is open. Capitalist class predation will stand or fail depending on whether political-economic institutional foundations continue to support accumulation for private gain or are revolutionized in the public interest. Battles by labor have been and will be lost, but the war? The material pressures toward commonwealth are irrepressible. The overarching aim of the classical humanist traditions, like that of the authors in this volume, has been to offer an apt contribution to the project of re-humanizing a de-humanized material culture. Labor is humanity's mode of being in the world. Commonwealth culture remains the venerable, and today thoroughly viable, means of survival for sensuous living labor. It is ultimately also labor's (and thus humanity's) aesthetic form.

My thesis is that the tremendous mass of corporate political-economic capital has reached its half-life limits; its forms of domination and power are outdated and gyrating dangerously. An intercultural labor force humanism, is not only necessary and feasible, it provides the gravitational center that holds real group life together despite other flare ups and explosions. Labor's humanism in this sense defines not only an emancipatory ethos, but the type of economic, social, and political structure that is needed for justice and peace to be accomplished and sustained.

Frans de Waal in *The Bonobo and the Atheist: In Search of Humanism among the Primates* (2013), *The Age of Empathy* (2009), and *Primates and Philosophers* (2006) has demonstrated that the sense of empathy and solidarity makes primate life viable; primates can exhibit violent behavior, fights, aggression, etc., but also behavior that is empathic, consoling: they engage in conflict resolution, peace-making, care-giving, reconciliation. These emotions and behaviors are *not* a “vener” over substantive brutality and barbarism, but rather the *real foundation of species survival*. Competition among “fittest” is a politically convenient and patriarchal construct. This primate sense of empathy and responsibility is the precursor to the conscious ethics of reciprocity and partnership that has developed in humans. Ethics preceded emergence of religion, not vice versa, and *our commonwealth sense* will give us direction long after religion has disappeared. See also Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis* (2009). Based on his assessment that there is “a new view of human nature . . . emerging in the natural and social sciences and in the humanities, with the discovery of *homo empathicus*” (2009, 2), he delves into “the human story that’s never been told” (2009, 9), namely that of a grand paradox in which the human aggression and war are seen as distortions and diversions from a fundamental propensity toward partnership, cooperation, and peace. De Wall and Rifkin shed new light on Marcuse’s humanist reading of Freud which envisioned a recall of the repressed, such that humanity might recapture from alienation and amnesia an awareness of its non-violent Orphic “archaic heritage” (Reitz 2000, 233). Likewise, in this volume we have seen how Marcuse theorized the power of sensuous living labor to liberate itself from commodification and make commonwealth the human condition.

Herbert Marcuse also knew that paradox persists: our options are socialism or barbarism. Convinced that counterrevolution was underway in the U.S. with politics veering to the extreme Right, he concluded with a statement of our contemporary crisis and challenge: “The life and death question for the Left is: Can the transformation of the corporate State into a neo-fascist State be prevented? The question, as well as the possible answers to it do not arise from a *revision* of Marxian theory, they are posed by Marxian theory itself!” (1979, 23).

Peter Marcuse correctly cautions us that radical change does not come about by itself, no matter how radical the goals. Change can be held back on the one hand by 1) the strength of the forces materially dominating and benefiting from the status quo; on the other it can be inhibited by 2) the weakness of the radical opposition. He asks us to think about 3) just who the agents of change might be who will actually achieve these goals.

A thoughtful response comes from Stephen Spartan: With regard to 1), we are seeing today the beginning of the end of a decaying system whose productive base is not being reproduced. Reproduction resources have been

shifted from the middle class—the American system’s vaunted citizenry—toward the financial sector and the society’s “1 percent.” The growth in income of society’s upper echelons of privilege (11.2 percent for uppermost 1 percent)¹ is dramatically out of proportion to the slow growth of GDP and the real economy (1.8 percent),² not to mention the reductions in income flow (down 0.4 percent)³ experienced by everyone else throughout the society (so much for “trickle-down”). Over-accumulation at the top is occurring at the expense of labor force reproduction, whose economic expectations are continually being leveled-down, and whose members are increasingly being treated with oligarchic disdain as expendable and dispensable. The demise of the system is occurring, including the very state which liberal policy-making would traditionally utilize to pacify and control the masses. The veneer of democracy is melting away in the heat of a new military nationalism. This can be viewed with horror, yet there is also the possibility of liberation. A world of abundance is possible and feasible given the system’s productive potential.

With regard to 2), what is lacking is the *commonwealth paradigm*, an awareness of the alternative. Prosperity is a collective product, this establishes the claim to *common wealth*. We have a *right* to a commonwealth economy, politics, and culture. The benefits of prosperity require cooperation, planning, a democratic commonwealth ethos, and an end to commodity-dependency. While the objective productive forces have ripened such that the global economy can be seen as pregnant with abundance, the *subjective* element matters. Without an adamant ideology of commonwealth, there is no sufficient negation, no sufficient transformation. *The labor theory of ethics and commonwealth raises expectations: there is a world to win!* Hence the emphasis in this volume on revolutionary critical pedagogy for a socialist society.

With regard to 3), the question of the agents of change, multiple groups internationally already recognize that commodified existence and economic want are not natural, but rather contrived; groups like the public domain software development communities producing shareware and freeware; groups like Adbusters, Greenpeace, the participants on the militant anti-globalization movement from Seattle (1999) to Genoa (2001), the *indignados* of France and Spain from 2010 forward, and the coordinated anti-austerity general strikes in five European countries November 14, 2012, as well as many others. They advocate that significant portions of commodified social life need to be rethought and reconstructed. Human essentials need to be met. Large swaths of working men and women around the globe have rising expectations and are aware of the need to end corporate rule and shift power to those who will prioritize human needs over private accumulation. The ideological justifications for capitalism have significantly eroded, as well as its major mode of control: commodity-dependency. In the riveting words of

Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco in *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (2012): “The game . . . is up. . . . Even our corporate overlords no longer believe the words they utter.” (2012, xii). Hedges and Sacco had to admit, however, that when they began writing their book, “the nation-wide revolt was absent”; that is, until the Occupy Wall Street movement flared up in dozens of U.S. cities. Their ultimate conclusion is that oppositional forces are real, not speculative: “There comes a moment in all popular uprisings when the dead ideas and decayed systems, which only days before seemed unassailable, are exposed and discredited by a population that once stood fearful and supine. . . . Astute observers know the tinder is there, but never when it will be lit” (2012, 226–227).

Our sense of the reality of right persists within a world of wrong. It infuses our theory and politics and the commonwealth counter-offensive. It presses humanity forward toward a future worth living—a rehumanized future that is clearly, but not easily, within our grasp. In accordance with this sensibility, *Crisis and Commonwealth: Marcuse, Marx, McLaren* has offered timely and insightful perspectives on our politics, praxis, and pedagogy. The essays presented in this collection give some indication of the explorations and struggles in which its authors have been engaged, primarily as pathfinders. It is my hope, as general editor, that their efforts have now resonated and converged with *your own* intimations and experiences to advance socialism’s most radical goals in a global revolutionary movement. As Marcuse (2009, 43) admonishes us: “*IT CAN STILL BE DONE!*”

NOTES

1. Annie Lowery, “Incomes Flat in Recovery, but Not for the 1%,” *The New York Times*, February 16, 2013, p. B-1.
2. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, “Growth in Goods and Services Industries Slowed in 2011,” November 13, 2012. Retrieved February 27, 2013, from http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/industry/gdpindustry/2012/pdf/gdpind11_rev_fax.pdf.
3. Lowery, op. cit.

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Appendix

Four Manuscripts on Value Theory, Humanism, and Socialism

Herbert Marcuse

Item #1

The following typed two-page German-language manuscript, “Wert und Tauschwert fallen nicht zusammen,” is filed as HMA 0109.01 (Herbert Marcuse Archive, Stadt- und Universitäts Bibliothek Frankfurt). It contains a handwritten notation at the top, “15. IV. 36,” which could indicate the date of the typescript following the German convention of noting first the day, then the month, and then year: 15. April 1936. Marcuse’s use of the German language and the economic content would testify also to this as its time frame. It would place Marcuse in New York City at the time when he and his Frankfurt School colleagues, including Max Horkheimer, were developing their now classic 1937 formulations of critical theory in the German language for the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. The original publications of Max Horkheimer’s “Traditional and Critical Theory” and Herbert Marcuse’s “Philosophy and Critical Theory” both occurred in German versions in the same *Zeitschrift* issue that year. In the remarks that follow Marcuse treats the central philosophical notions undergirding the Marxist critique of the commodification of labor and economic life. My translation.—CR

VALUE AND EXCHANGE VALUE

1. Value and exchange value are not identical; rather, they overlap. What is the meaning of their difference?

2. The differentiation between value and exchange value in itself contains a critical element. This is because in bourgeois society value and exchange value are regarded as completely identical insofar as human beings and goods are defined in terms of the exchange values they happen to possess. Within (philosophical and religious) ideologies value usually is treated with greater dignity and is seen as seemingly detached from the prices that express exchange value; however the Marxist concept of value clarifies that this apparent detachment is illusory. This is because his concept of value—developed out of the economics in which bourgeois society values everything in terms of exchange value—shows itself to be a value conception from which several other insights can be derived and explained which permit criticism of the conventional ideology. Although the concept of value is introduced from the perspective of economics, it overlaps with other insights that go beyond the sphere of economics.

3. The value of a good can never be understood isolated within a particular sub-division of the production or circulation process, whether this would be by deriving it from the market alone or from the production process alone. In the assessment of value and exchange value the temporal sequence must be left out altogether; when assessing the value of a good, it is meaningless to inquire at what point before it reached the market its value was determined or whether it attained its value just as it was offered on the market or just at the time it was in fact sold. Whenever one wants to understand the value aspect of any particular exchange event, one must comprehend the totality of production and circulation relationships within the society.

4. The method of Marxism has logical presuppositions that correspond to the historical presuppositions of an object. Simple commodity production is not only a conceptual oversimplification, but also an historical preliminary stage (*Vorstufe*). Marx wanted above all else, given his completion of the analysis of the economic system, to furnish simultaneously an adequate analysis of the historical epoch. This interpenetration of the logical and the historical categories is an important characteristic of the dialectical method.

5. Marx understands value on the basis of abstract labor time. The category of abstract labor time is not immediately intelligible. Is it an axiom? If it is, then only in this sense: his explication of the total system allows its axiomatic character to be superseded [*aufgehoben*]; it is shown to be the decisive historical relationship.

Item #2

The original German-language version of this almost completely unknown address by Marcuse to the 1962 Berlin congress of B'nai B'rith, "Humanismus und Humanität," was published a few years ago in Germany by Peter-Erwin Jansen. To my knowledge this has never before been translated or published in English. See Peter-Erwin Jansen (ed), *Herbert Marcuse Nachgelassene Schriften Band 3: Philosophie und Psychoanalyse* (Lüneburg: zu Klampen, 2002) pp. 122–130. My translation.—CR

HUMANISM AND HUMANITY

Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me to begin with an apology that really is not one. I am afraid that I will be speaking rather negatively—but I believe that seeing the negative and addressing it is a fundamental presupposition for anything positive. Today the words "humanity" and "humanism" cause us some perplexity. Clearly something about them has not worked. It seems as though these ideas, these concepts, are of only antiquarian value, that humanism and humanity belong only to history. But what does that mean: that they belong only to history? If something happened just thirty years ago, that is history, and yet it conditions the present and will also affect our future. What we have learned during these thirty years that we had not earlier known, is this: what human beings can be made to do. They can be made into inhuman beings. In addition they can be made, in a pleasant enough way, so pliable and adaptable, that they can no longer defend themselves, so they are no longer capable of distinguishing truth from lies, education from propaganda. Before we can understand what is happening and what we can do about it, we must relearn how to see, we must relearn how to think. What human beings can be made to do is one of the lessons that too many have forgotten, though the power elite has not forgotten it. We are all inclined to forget that which is false, to forgive that which is false; we don't forget what is right, we don't forgive what is right. In history nothing repeats itself in the same way. If something repeats itself, it does so in a different form, and so both humanism and humanity have a new form and a new content. If I may, I would like to briefly bring to mind what humanism and humanity have meant historically. Humanism was the intellectual movement that, since the close of the middle ages, saw to it that the study of classical antiquity would serve as one of the fundamental pre-conditions for the free development of the human personality and human individuality. The idea of education, the idea of culture, stood against everything barbaric, everything inhuman, unfree. Humanity—that was the idea of the human species—the unity and the equality of all persons—standing above all conflicts among races, nations, and cultures. This

was the idea of humanity, not as an abstract concept, but as a challenging task yet to be accomplished.

And now let's ask: if this all is so, what does humanism have to do with humanity? Through an education to the classics and culture of the ancient world, the Renaissance and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sought an education of humanity against its intellectual and political repression by medieval scholasticism and secular despotisms which required further human subjugation, unfreedom, wretchedness. We will hold in abeyance here the question of whether or not the idea of classical culture here was in fact an accurate one, and whether or not classical culture really opposed repression and unfreedom in this sense. But it is certain that this great humanism had a pagan and a libertarian undertone which we clearly see in "the Renaissance man," in Rabelais, in Spinoza, in Goethe, and (here I want to name someone who is usually not mentioned as a humanist, but who in my estimation is one of the last great humanists) Sigmund Freud, of whom I shall soon speak further. Each of these great humanists formulated an idea of humanity that was suited to its time. What does it mean to say an idea is suited to its time? Am I saying that that the idea of humanity and the actualization of humanity are so time-dependent that the concepts may become obsolete? No! But to clarify this, I would like to provide a brief indication of what humanity authentically means. Humanity—the people. But the people not as a biological species or genus, people not as a total natural organism, rather the people as a critical intellectual unit, as an historical totality. Those qualities which in practice define people as people, as distinguished from animals and non-persons, constitute a human being in this sense. Primarily this means intelligence, but not intelligence as an abstract faculty, but intelligence as the capacity to understand the human condition and hence transform it such that crudeness, helplessness, hunger, and ignorance can be overcome. Understanding intelligence in this manner presupposes an independence of mind. This is the ability of the individual to think autonomously, rather than to simply comply with habits of thought worked out first by others. In other words, intelligence in connection with humanity and humanism is, as such, first and foremost freedom and has freedom as its precondition. Now of course this knowledge and this intelligence, which can contribute to the actualization of human potential, are never merely individual matters. The individual, as an isolated person, is unable to meet the challenge. This is an historical and social responsibility which civilization can, or at least should, carry out against raw nature and against all repressive social and intellectual forces.

To the degree that society becomes humane, it makes the equality of all people (as expressed in humanism) into a reality. This means equality of every human face and person, not just among those of a particular nation, race, or tribe, but above and beyond, and in opposition to, the division of

humanity into different nations, races, or tribes. Equality, because every human being has all the qualities and capacities that define humans as human. And it is only this equality of all human beings that makes freedom possible. Because there is almost an obligation today to misinterpret it, I feel compelled to explain what this equality, the equality which stands in the center of humanism, actually means. Equality in its humanist sense, as it was understood before Christianity in the ancient Greek world, naturally did not involve people being all the same, but rather the direct opposite. Equality in its humanist sense created the fundamental condition on the basis of which all persons were able to fulfill their own needs and utilize their own talents becoming truly free individuals who could be different and where differences were not suppressed. For this reason humanism must be grounded in this idea of equality; if this precondition does not exist, human beings can only be free at the expense of others. And then one is not really free. Because one who is free only at the expense of others is dependent on those who are not free. What are the fundamental conditions that must be in place in order for humanity to be a reality and not a mere idea? They can be pulled together in a single proposition, that being: the vital needs of all human beings must be met. Met in a very emphatic sense. Met such that people's lives are no longer spent in a brutal struggle for existence; such that work is no longer a mere means to life, but instead an expression of the free development of one's own personality. Yet if this and only this counts as humanity, if this and only this counts as human existence, then right up to today no authentic humanity has ever existed. So for quite a while now, our civilization has not made our humanity a reality; hence we should not speak so easily about progress, nor look down so quickly on classical antiquity because it maintained that slavery was natural. What did Aristotle mean by this assertion, which like so many of his propositions is misunderstood?

He meant that people exist who are incapable of independent thought and independent action, and who cannot decide things for themselves, because they must spend their lives in producing the necessities of life and therefore cannot live life as an end in itself. This is because they are human instruments: they are unfree. As you can see, Aristotle took freedom very seriously. It was his view that no person was free just because work was over for the day, or because it was a holiday, and therefore he did not attribute humanity to the slave. We know today that there is nothing natural about slavery. We know that it is possible for all people to have human(e) qualities (*Menschlichkeit*). But have we thereby overcome slavery? Or has it been internalized, made more general, more democratic, more pleasant, more unproblematic. The struggle for existence goes on. It is every bit as brutal as it ever was, not only for individuals, but also for nations around the world. This struggle is not getting easier; it is getting more global, more destructive, more inhuman. So, can the apologists of violence be right when they say concepts like

humanism and humanity are abstract concepts, concepts of a bourgeois culture which have become obsolete? No, humanism is more than that kind of concept; but we must admit that humanism as an historical movement has collapsed. But let us also admit something more difficult: that our contemporary epoch is more inhuman(e) than the past. This is because the degree of inhumanity can be assessed in only one way: in comparison with the given possibilities of furnishing a human(e) existence to everyone. And the given possibilities, technical possibilities, economic possibilities, are greater now than they have been in any historical period. With the growth of these possibilities has come the growth of destructiveness. Civilization continues and strides forth under the ongoing threat of atomic warfare, total annihilation. Humanism is not at fault for this. The fault lies with a civilization to which humanism both complied and of which it simultaneously complained. I'd like to remind you in a few words of the diagnosis of this guilt made by Freud. He predicted this catastrophe. It was his belief that cultural progress requires the repression of drives and impulses, a repression of that which he had called the pleasure principle. This refers to the core drives of an organism to satisfy its needs and desires. Culture is built upon an organism's repression of this pleasure principle, its becoming an instrument of labor [alienated labor—CR].

And against this repression, the individual reacts instinctively with a rebellion against the father and against all social elements that represent the father and which impose instinctual repression through the society's morality. This imposition is further repressed, and the feelings of guilt, guilt on account of the rebellion against the father, are anchored within the individual and become stronger. The result according to Freud: a continual diminution of the vital drives and erotic pleasures, and the growth of drives toward aggression, destruction, and death. Also according to Freud: as cultures progress, this fatal dynamic intensifies. It intensifies because the more technical progress makes possible the satisfaction of life's needs with less and less labor, the necessity to reproduce instinctual repression becomes that more urgent. A civilization built upon the necessity of work would collapse without this existential struggle. But a progressing culture can maintain these pressures only by providing also an escape valve for the instincts (one that functions better and better), and this escape valve is the release of the destructive drives. These interconnections were a necessity, according to Freud. Cultural progress hinges upon advancements in the destruction of material and intellectual resources, and it is precisely this sort of destruction that work, wealth, the conquest of nature, science and technology, make happen. Yet in the end the individual pays. Living standards rise with increased preparations for war; the population grows simultaneously with genocide; space flight and national aggressiveness go hand in hand. This is Freud.

Is there anyone who does not believe in the inevitability of such developments? Let us not underestimate the extent of the changes that have to be made in order to avoid catastrophe. Humanism, in its traditional form, has been shipwrecked. I have said that this is not the fault of humanism, but humanism is in part responsible, as I would briefly like to make clear to you. The ways and means by which humanity may be actualized as humanity changes over time. Today the concept of humanism is not adequate to this task. The main weakness of traditional humanism was its insistence on the education of humanity to a sense of human inwardness and to a certain style of life that was in reality only accessible to an elite.

The well-rounded personality, the ideal of humanism, the intellectual education and physical training, presupposed a degree of material and mental independence that only the fewest people had. Consequently: humanism fled the miserable conditions through an escape into the private sphere of a personal humanism separated from the public sphere, the societal sphere. One could be humane at home or on Sundays, but during the week one participated in the humiliation of humanity. Just one example of this: the great humanist Goethe, a minister of the court in Weimar, signed-off on a death sentence of a woman found guilty of murdering her child—a tragedy—which Goethe thereafter described with such empathy in *Faust* that the inhumanity of the death sentence was movingly expressed. But the miserable realities of social existence were not altered through these higher values. Indeed, the higher values could easily be transformed into the “packaging” of an inhuman society. One could be so proud of one’s Goethe and one’s Beethoven and at the same time construct concentration camps. In spite of this, humanism did of course contribute to the humanization of culture. Civilization did become more humane. The rule of law became standardized, more predictable. Society became more democratic, poverty was slowly pushed back, the social order made more reasonable and more secure. In all of this I have spoken of the past. We must admit that that the present is less humanistic, less liberal, more violent and more destructive than those days. Humanism’s powerlessness has increased, and its weakness has negative implications. It does not look reality in the eye; it has not adequately pushed back the intellectual, spiritual, and theoretical limits. It has had no effect upon politics, which is still bound together with the fate of humanity. Today humanism must become political. As a plank of some political platform, as a slogan of a united front organization? Certainly not! Humanism is not compatible today with any of the contemporary political organizations. Humanists are not welcome today in any of the contemporary political organizations. It can all-too-easily happen that these organizations fight for just those things the humanists are fighting against. Today the task of the humanist is first and foremost to discern and to communicate just what is going on. A recognition and denunciation of the bad is today more than ever the precondition for overcoming

the bad. Recognizing the bad is hard enough, denouncing it is unpleasant and dangerous. Why is this? It is so difficult because humanism today demands a critique of the contemporary world situation without compromise.

It is more and more difficult to recognize the powers opposed to gratification since they are more and more hidden behind the advancing technologies of control over human beings and nature. How can anyone criticize a society that is improving and elevating the standard of living, and making life easier. Critique is not easy: genuinely humanistic criticism addresses the most sacred cows of the nation and its strategy. Thus, the humanist in the East today easily appears as a capitalist; in the West as a communist. More specifically and concretely: just what are the issues today that humanistic criticism needs to address? How contemporary civilization threatens to botch its historic chance at economic, social, and political fulfillment. How the total readiness for the total annihilation of the enemy is at the same time a total readiness for one's own annihilation. How the risks of peace are still better and less likely than the risks of atomic war or the risks of diminishing the intellectual and physical prowess of the current and future generations. How the military and economic preparations for the eventuality of war produces exactly those forces, once again, that have engineered the destruction of humanity already once in our lifetimes. As you see, humanism is a painful challenge. Culture, education, compassion are no longer sufficient: today in these areas everyone can be a humanist. But they have never in this manner alone been able to stop the butchery. Humanism is becoming a more and more serious matter, the more likely the eventuality of human annihilation becomes, the more civilization has all the technical and scientific means at its disposal to make humanity real.

In conclusion, let me remind you of something great and emblematic of the twentieth century: Schönberg's "Moses and Aron," which many of you saw in a splendid performance yesterday. This is a relevant and rich work of art because it appears that the struggle between and Moses and Aron, as depicted in this piece, has not ended; indeed it might just be beginning. The struggle between and Moses and Aron: false images, images of a false freedom, a false humanity; against the idea, against the concept [of human liberation—CR] that demands realization. False deeds against knowledge, against the principles that demand realization. A civilization that is capable of conquering outer space should also be able to fashion upon earth a place where everyone enjoys human dignity and worth. Yet we must not underestimate the immensity of the negatives that lie before this undertaking. We may even have to go, as in the story of Moses and Aron, once again into the desert before this task can be accomplished.

I apologize once again here at the end as I did at the beginning for being so negative, but I believe negativity is a precondition of improvement.

Item #3

After Brandeis University refused to extend his appointment, Marcuse was requested by popular demand to make a farewell address. On April 27, 1965, he made the following presentation with the curious title “The Obsolescence of Socialism” (HMA 0257.01). Marcuse had published *Eros and Civilization* and *Soviet Marxism*, and just published *One-Dimensional Man*, the blistering account of the repressive features of U.S. mass culture and the nation’s narrow and conventional forms of academic thinking. In this address Marcuse makes clear that his title does not mean he has concluded that Marx’s analysis of capitalism is wrong. Far from it. Yet he asserts that Marx’s concept of socialism is not *radical* enough, given the changed circumstances of advanced industrial society entering the second half of the twentieth century. This essay presents a lengthy Marx quotation that he says Marx, himself, suppressed. In it Marx appears to question the applicability of the labor theory of value under conditions of advanced automation, and indicate that capitalism could collapse even without the revolutionary agency of the labor force. Under these conditions “the new freedom” would mean that human beings flourish *not* as primarily as beneficiaries of enlarged productive forces, but as all-round individuals. As Marcuse reads Marx, in this passage, the *old* socialism must become the *new* humanism. The notes on value published above as Item #1 stress Marcuse’s view that Marx was trying to understand economic life in its totality. So too in this address: the labor process must always be seen as a part of that totality. Automation, in and of itself, leads neither to humanism, socialism, or the collapse of capitalism. Labor without means (and it goes without saying) means without labor are not productive. In a further essay tackling the question of socialism a decade later, presented as the last item in this Appendix, Marcuse supplements his insights here with a reprise of his classical Marxist appreciation for the transformative role of labor in the transition to socialism’s most radical goals.

THE OBSOLESCENCE OF SOCIALISM

Let me first thank you, those of you who drew up the petition to extend my appointment here, those of you who signed the petition, and those of you who didn’t. I can only repeat what I wrote to the *Justice* [Brandeis campus newspaper—CR] and what I mean very seriously: it is for your sake, it is because of you that I regret very much that I have to leave Brandeis. It is because of my friends on the faculty that I regret that I have to leave Brandeis. You will not believe it, but it is true: I learned quite a bit from you, and you contributed quite a bit to what I had to say and to whatever ideas I may have developed during my time at Brandeis. I think I use this opportunity

best if instead of making a farewell speech I deliver some kind of lecture. But I want to emphasize, for reasons which you shall see, that this is not a classroom exercise. You are not a captive audience here, as you are in the classroom, and not because I want to transgress the boundaries of academic freedom, but because the ideas I want to discuss here tonight are not quite developed by myself. It is a kind of testing. Much of it you will know, but there might be some new turn in it which at least may give you food for consideration.

I chose as the title of my lecture "The Obsolescence of Socialism," and the title was meant to be only half ironical. Let me first tell you what the title does not mean. The title does not mean that Marx's analysis of capitalism was wrong. Here are his main theses which I will try to sum up for you as best as I can and as slowly as I can.

First, the social relationships among individuals in capitalist society are governed by the exchange value—that is the market value not the use value—of the goods and services which the individuals produce. That is to say, the relations among men are governed by their marketability. Second, in this exchange society the satisfaction of human needs occurs only as a by-product of profitable commodity production. Third, in the progress of capitalism, the twofold contradiction unfolds between the growing productivity of labor and the growing social wealth on the one side, and their destructive and repressive use; and between the social character of the means of production (that is to say, they are no longer subject to individual but only collective control, they are no longer individual instruments, but collective instruments of labor) and the private ownership and control of the means of production. Fourth, capitalism can solve this contradiction only temporarily through increasing waste and aggressive expansion: imperialism leading to a recurrent cycle of war and depression, wiping out the benefit of the intervening period of prosperity. Fifth, the laboring classes who bear the brunt of exploitation seize the productive apparatus and bring it under the collective control of society as a whole. Now I submit that all these propositions, with the possible exception of the last one, have been validated. Even there, one could point out, that what has taken place is that the class struggle has been transformed from the national to the international arena and has developed into the worldwide struggle between "have" and "have not" nations.

Now, if this is the case, if that much of the Marxian analysis is validated by the actual development, why then and in what respect is Marxian socialism obsolete? You know that Marx assumed that the transition from capitalism to socialism would take place in the highly developed capitalist countries. And precisely in these countries the social classes which were supposed to make the transition are no longer interested in it because they have acquired a vested interest in the very society they were supposed to abolish. This is a truism today and the truism misses the decisive point. It was not so

much impoverishment and the suffering from impoverishment which made Marx envisage the laboring classes as the agent of this transition to socialism, but the vital need for a revolution which was supposed to make the laboring classes this historical agent. That means, Marx supposed as precondition for the revolution a social class with qualitatively different interests and aspirations, with a different mentality, and which precisely because of this qualitative difference would be capable of building a qualitatively different society, one free from alienation. It was only because the laboring classes supposedly did not succumb to the aggressive and competitive needs of the established system that they were supposed to be the agents of its transformation. Now, the emergence of such a new class within the old society is prevented by the overflowing productivity of the affluent society and by its ability—this is decisive—by the ability of the affluent society to create and satisfy needs which in turn reproduce and strengthen the same social system. Thus instead of the class struggle between essentially different and irreconcilable interests, you have competition of essentially the same interests. In one word, Marx imagined the collapse of capitalism as a result of the class struggle waged of necessity by the exploited and suffering classes against a small number of exploiters. He did not foresee the long-range incorporation of the exploited classes into the high standard of living of an affluent society; he did not envisage any other mode of collapse of capitalism except through class struggle. Or did he envisage such a different mode of collapse?

Indeed he did—a collapse apparently independent of the traditional forms of class struggle, a collapse which would take place almost entirely behind the backs of the individuals, in—and I chose the word intentionally—in an automatic manner . . . a collapse by virtue of the overflowing productivity of the system under the pressure of competition. I want to read you one passage from the first version of *Das Kapital*, written in 1857, which exists in no English translation. It is a difficult passage; I shall read it slowly; it is perhaps one of the most important passages in the work of Marx.

As large scale industry advances, the creation of real wealth depends increasingly less on the labor time and the quantity of labor expended in the productive process than on the power of the instruments set in motion during the labor time. These instruments and their growing effectiveness are in no proportion to the actual labor time which the production requires. Their effectiveness rather depends on the attained level of science and technical progress. Human labor then is no longer enclosed in the process of production. Man rather relates himself to the process of production merely as supervisor and regulator. [. . . —CR] He then stands outside this process, instead of being its principal agent. In this transformation the basis of production and wealth is no longer the actual physical labor performed by man himself nor his labor time, but his own creative power, that is his knowledge and mastery of nature through his social existence. In one word, in the development of the social all-

round individual. [. . . —CR] Then the theft of another man's labor time on which the social wealth still rests today becomes a miserable basis compared with the new basis which large scale industry itself has created. As soon as human labor in its physical form has ceased to be the great source of wealth, labor time will cease and must of necessity cease to be the measure of wealth, and exchange value must necessarily cease to be the measure of use value. The surplus labor of the mass of the population has then ceased to be the condition for the development of social wealth, and the leisure of the few has ceased to be a condition for the development of the intellectual faculties of man. The capitalist mode of production which rests on the exchange value thus collapses.¹

Not a word about class struggle, not a word about impoverishment and exploitation. This was written a hundred years before we knew what automation is. Now the interesting thing—it was Marx himself who later on repressed this version, which now appears perhaps as his most realistic and his most amazing insight. It includes, as those of you who know Marx will have noticed, the simple rejection of the labor theory of value and the acknowledgment that the capitalist society will reach this stage within its own development where this theory is no longer valid. The implications of this passage are tremendous. If this should indeed be the last transformation of capitalism, then Marx's idea of socialism would not be radical enough and would not be extreme enough. Marx himself underrated the possibilities of the new society. Why? Because with this automatic transformation of capitalism, with this total automation, the distinction would be surpassed between socially necessary work and individual work, between alienated and non-alienated labor, between work and labor, and perhaps even between play and labor. Moreover, the new freedom would show forth—and I think that again is a decisive point—not in the further development of the productive forces but rather in their redirection, perhaps even their restriction; would show forth in a reduction of the high standard of living which includes waste, poverty, and war.

From here the affluent society appears in a new light, as a society which is organized to stave off these new forms of freedom which we may comprise in one phrase, forms of freedom which would make possible the pacification of the struggle for existence. The affluent society would be mobilized against it by diverting productivity from the elimination of toil and poverty to waste, planned destruction in order to perpetuate the struggle for existence on which its institutions are based. This organization perpetuates repressive and aggressive needs which in turn repress the emergence of the entirely new needs and aspirations on which the possibility for a new and freer society rests. It would follow that socialism still is the real possibility of a free society in countries where the power of advanced productivity has not yet suffocated or satiated the need for real freedom, where people can still start to rebuild their

society from scratch in an entirely different way, that is to say in the underdeveloped countries. And we would again have a case, an historical case, of the advantage of backwardness, the advantage of the late-comer, whereas in the overdeveloped society the next higher stage would have to be defined in entirely different terms so that socialism would appear not as it does today, merely as a streamlined continuation of advanced capitalism, but as its true negation and as the liberation of really human and humane needs.

Now one only has to invoke this image in order to see the impossibility of its realization. It seems today romantic, it seems naive; and indeed we have progressed beyond romanticism to a stage of realism where we accept the given reality as all reality and can think of a better one only in terms of the growth of the established society. Today neither the objective nor the subjective conditions seem to prevail for the development of a really free society. Neither the subjective conditions because the existing societies have preformed and pre-directed the needs, the instinctual as well as conscious needs and aspirations of man so that they sustain and perpetuate a universe of violence, aggression, and repression. Nor the objective conditions because profitable industrialization has transformed the world into the stuff of administered production and consumption—a total society, the comforts of which are sufficient reason for repressing the price: escalation of war and the revival of medieval cruelty and brutality. In the advanced capitalist countries there seem to be only two alternatives. First, the growth of the existing productive apparatus and the transformation of the entire population into one big mass of satisfied customers of administered goods and services with continued poverty and fear as deterrents. Or secondly, a nuclear war, another case where I am afraid a prediction of Marx may still prove to be true. You know that he considered war not as an accident but as built into the very structure of the capitalist system and he spoke of a recurrent and shortened cycle of such wars. If you start with 1870, the beginning of the new phase of capitalism, you have 1870, 1914, 1939.

Now the first alternative, the growth of the existing apparatus and the transformation of the population into one mass of consumers would involve continuation of the Pentagon, of Madison Avenue, of the FBI, and of their eastern counterparts; while the second alternative, nuclear war, may mean that the whole thing starts all over again, from cannibalism to the hydrogen bomb. Under these circumstances I believe it is our duty not to repress too effectively the third alternative which I have indicated, the most utopian one which becomes ever more utopian because we repress it, namely the alternative of that new idea of socialism which I like to call libertarian socialism and against which the existing societies are really mobilized. A libertarian socialism which promises and can promise on the basis of totally rationalized and automated labor a life without fear, a life in peace, a life with the pacification of the struggle for existence, a life without the cold and hot war lords and

their lieutenants in our institutions and in ourselves. Against the image of such a society they come immediately with the "missing incentives" as if there could be a stronger incentive to work than to work for joy. Don't believe those who tell you that you cannot be happy without some misery and pain as a nice contrast. There will always be enough misery and enough pain even in a free society. They don't have to be created and re-created as socially necessary requirements.

True, you, we, get a lot out of the existing society and many are better off today than they were ever before, therefore nobody has a right to proselytize and indoctrinate those who feel happy and satisfied in this society. Nobody has a right to advocate change of a system to those who are satisfied by the system. But, by the same token, nobody, and least of all the educator, has the right to refuse to listen and to help those who don't feel satisfied, who somehow sense a terrible connection between the affluent society and increasing aggression, violence and frustration, a terrible connection between prosperity and Vietnam, between progress and ever better scientific calculation of profitable kill and over-kill. Today's universe of violence and aggression is man's answer to conditions which keep him an object of administration and keep his life a means for earning a living when it could be an end in itself, when he could be the free subject of his own existence.

No great psychological profundity is required in order to justify the radical critique of such conditions: not humanity in the abstract is at stake, but the life of every one of us, and—if not our physical existence, our existence as human beings—with a conscience and a consciousness of our own. And the critique must be more radical because the alternatives, the stakes are more radical, the break between old and new is more radical.

The socialist formula, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need," won't do anymore, because, first, the existing societies may well be able to satisfy prevailing material and cultural needs which these societies themselves have shaped and made into profitable needs. And secondly, the prevailing needs are also those which make for the perpetuation of the status quo in the very instinct of the individual. The existing needs are those which militate against pacification. I have said that the alternative would involve the break precisely with the prevailing needs and aspirations, the emergence of new, vital, instinctual as well as conscious needs which must be there before we change.

What kinds of needs? I will try to indicate very briefly what I have in mind. Among the new needs and aspirations, instinctual as well as conscious, which could prepare the ground for a qualitative change in this development, would be what we may call an existential neurosis which prevents the functioning of the organism as an instrument of alienated labor and as an instrument of manipulation. An instinctual need, and I underline the word instinctual, for peace, not as the intervening period between wars, but as a perma-

nent condition. An instinctual revulsion against aggression, against all kinds of so-called "heroes," a need for independence, privacy, solidarity, silence; a need for intelligence and the creative use of intelligence for satisfying these new instinctual needs.

Now if the emergence of such, today admittedly strange, needs is a precondition of change, how can these needs develop in the individuals themselves, for certainly they cannot be imposed on the individuals, in the individuals themselves as their own real needs? Here we can and should recall the insights of psychoanalysis.

These needs are there, in the instinctual structure of man himself. They are in the primary struggle of the life instincts, of Eros, against death and destruction. In the instinctual struggle of the pleasure principle against the reality principle. Today the affluent society has succeeded in mobilizing the destructive instincts in a socially useful way on an unprecedented scale. It has also succeeded in pressing the erotic instincts into the service of this society. But, repression remains repression, no matter how comfortable it may be. And the reaction is a neurosis very different from the one I tried to indicate, a neurosis in permanence and as a normal condition of existence which shows in the insanity of the mass media, in the evermore gratuitous delinquency and criminality, in the Orwellian language of politics, in the bombs at the top and the knife at the bottom of our society.

All this is open, easily accepted and rationalized, even rational. But the consciousness which can take all this without getting sick is a sick consciousness and a false consciousness; a false consciousness but also a very thin consciousness. The repressive layer can fall off. Almost anything may trigger off, not the revolution, but the manifestation of repressed needs in political action.

And this is my very informal and not quite negative conclusion. I believe that the recent political situation at the campuses is an instinctual, an emotional rather than an intellectual revolt, or even better, revulsion, against aggression and cruelty. Remember the march to Washington. For once, the world-spirit apparently was with you. The weather was nice, as I hear, the air was soft, you met many friends and acquaintances: politics under the pleasure principle. This is good, as a matter of fact, probably the best that happened recently, and I tell you why. It wouldn't make the policy makers change their policies, although if you read the newspapers you will see that you have already succeeded in getting them jittery. It may, in other words, do nothing to the policy makers, but it may, and I hope it did, do a lot to you. Namely, suddenly you have seen that you are not alone. Suddenly you have noticed what solidarity is and what solidarity can be. You can no longer complain. Suddenly you have seen that there were ten thousand, fifteen, perhaps even twenty thousand, and that from a relatively small area of the United States. So please do not ask anymore: "What can we do?" You have

already done something about it, and something which I believe you will not forget. The only thing I want to ask of you tonight is that in your interest, in my interest, in our common interest, that you keep it up. Thank you.

Item #4

This nineteen page typescript, "Why Talk on Socialism," (HMA 0500.01) has a handwritten notation (perhaps by an archivist or earlier researcher) above its title: "HM UCSD Feb. 24, 1975." This seems a legitimate reference to the time of its composition at the University of California, San Diego, the institution Herbert Marcuse was affiliated with during the most tumultuous period in his intellectual and political career. The Vietnam War was finally ending with the defeat of Saigon in April 1975 (the U.S. had somewhat earlier withdrawn its troops); the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC, consisting of the Arab members of OPEC, plus Egypt, Syria, and Tunisia) had proclaimed an oil embargo against the U.S. two years earlier causing political-economic backlash in the West against oil price increases; Nixon had just resigned the U.S. presidency in the aftermath of Watergate facing almost certain impeachment and removal from office and Gerald Ford became the unelected U.S. president; and reactionary California governor Ronald Reagan's second term had just ended during which he sought and obtained the forced retirement of Marcuse from his teaching position. In February 1975 Marcuse was in a post-retirement phase, yet he did continue to lecture at UCSD occasionally. This was a period of ongoing political ferment, including much contentious rivalry among campus radicals and socialist organizations. The manuscript contains a forceful restatement of the logic and necessity of socialism in the U.S. today, but its main line of reasoning ends abruptly with a note of caution against sectarian squabbling. I believe a concluding passage is missing. The text is clearly the draft of an important and radical address set down in outline form, triple-spaced for the most part, with revisions/additions in Marcuse's identifiable hand and some few marginalia in the hand of an unknown amanuensis. The transcription below follows the typescript and Marcuse's handwriting word for word, preserving incomplete sentences, sentence fragments, and original emphases, while consolidating clearly grouped statements into paragraph form. Some notes in the unknown hand are omitted as redundant/unrelated. The typescript's last two pages were created on a different (manual rather than IBM Selectric) typewriter, as the distinctive fonts attest, and were apparently intended for insertion into the body of the address as I have placed them, between "***" symbols, below.—CR

WHY TALK ON SOCIALISM?

Because an alternative to the established social system seems more and more on the agenda—an alternative possible to realize in this country. Marxian theory considers socialism as the only historical successor of capitalism which could bring about human progress after the elimination of the destruc-

tiveness of capitalism. To get an objective picture (as far as possible) suspend all judgment as to whether the existing socialist-communist countries can be called so in Marxian terms; disregard the innumerable different interpretations among the innumerable Marxist groups (Old and New Left)—they have enough in common.

“Alternative” = which replaces the established system *as a whole* which means: not only other and better (more equitable) functioning institutions (economic and political), but also a “new *quality of life*” a mode of existence = non-alienated relationships. . . . (I’ll come back to this).

But why a total alternative, why not reforms, modifications *within* capitalism? Because—and here we encounter a basic Marxian conception—the prevailing crisis is rooted in the very structure of capitalism, and is bound to become aggravated as capitalism continues to grow: capitalism destroys itself as it progresses! Therefore no reforms make sense. The notion that the society, *as a whole* is sick, destructive, is hopelessly outdated, has found *popular expression*: “loss of faith” in the system; decline in the work ethic, refusal to work, etc.

The Marxian notion contains three hypotheses which have to be demonstrated: 1) that capitalism, in its advance, develops aggravating conflicts (contradictions) which it cannot resolve, but also that *capitalism itself is based on a contradiction*; 2) that, at the same time, social forces emerge *within* the system which indicate the coming transition to socialism as a historic possibility: a) *objective*—transformation of the free enterprise economy into monopoly and state capitalism; joint stock companies: first “socialization” of ownership; b) *subjective*—a politically conscious working class, forming the human base of the revolution; 3) that socialism is the only historical alternative for a better society (= *non-utopian*, “scientific,” “*definite negation*”).

To discuss in terms of the contemporary American scene: the “energy crisis,” the corruption of democracy, unemployment, inflation—structural crisis of capitalism. [It is apparently here that the typescript’s last two pages are to be inserted as follows.—CR]

***Food and energy crisis in reality prices and money crisis. Not world food crisis bothers U.S., but increased control over U.S. which flow of money to Arabs gives them. Arabs portrayed as cause of crisis, but at most aggravating situation.² Revenge on Europe for nineteenth century, and on U.S. for Vietnam. Dependency [of] industrial U.S. on oil, post-World War II phenomenon. Cheap fuel enabled industrial machine to grow at such astounding pace. In effect, Western economy was subsidized by oil-producing nations. Gross waste—U.S. six percent of [world] population, uses one-third of energy of world (eg. large automobiles, poorly insulated homes, [the] sabotage [of] efficient rail transportation in favor of more profitable cars). Price of oil had always been artificial (set by monopoly, not competition).

Arab action merely gives them power held by multinationals previously. Corporations kept profit level by passing increase on to consumer. Arab power comes from companies themselves having cut production to maintain prices, and competition for oil among Western nations. Present action to regulate oil companies because they no longer provide cheap fuel on which system depends.

World faces shortage not simply solvable by conservation due to failure to prepare for eventual depletion of fossil fuels and develop alternative sources because no profit to be had here. Necessity for rational, collective planning. (Only nuclear power developed—military.) Complexity and scope of problems means no longer possible to allow anarchy of marketplace to rule.

Food crisis [is] one of distribution, not supply, fundamentally, but even [if] supply shortage, economics of capitalism responsible: U.S. pays farmers not to grow crops; in Africa, land use for profitable export crops, not internal food growth (South America—coffee and sugar) remnants of colonialism. Food withheld from India until they agreed to allow Rockefeller petrochemicals to control fertilizer market. Problems with birth control [as] solution: prerequisite is increased standard of living (poor have large families); crisis upon us before this could possibly be effective; diverts from true causes.

Waste in the U.S.—inefficiency of meat, but has become status of affluence. Packaging, advertising create artificial needs. Thirty years ago underdeveloped countries were exporting food? Why the shortage now? Their needs subordinate to industrial market—produc[ing] for export [they] swallowed Western economic theories; could buy cheap U.S. grain in age of surplus; foreign capital determines investments—land reform not tolerated (Allende).

Current proposals concentrate totally on technology as solution—only perpetuates dependency of poor on rich. Benefits of “Green Revolution” only to minority. Modernization drove farmers off land to become urban unemployed. West prefers occasional aid to fundamental reforms which could free poor from dependency. All governments divert from use to waste (military). Change in world structure required. ***

Marx’s model: capitalism functioning under its *own, optimal conditions*. Capitalism = production for private profit under *competitive* conditions—can function only if growing, *enlarged* accumulation, investments, commodity sales—therefore it necessitates: constant raising of the productivity of labor through technical progress, mechanization, rationalization, speed-up systems. But $C = (c+v)^3$ Consequence: concentration of capital in fewer and fewer hands, monopolistic resulting from free competition (dialectic!)—saturation of the domestic market: therefore imperialist expansion abroad, colonialism, arms race, self-propelling production of waste, planned obsolescence, gadgets, luxuries for the privileged metropolitan population, under

intensified exploitation of labor in the metropolis and in the Third World. Result: constant *overproduction*.

BUT: the inner *limits of growth*: declining rate of profit for all but the few oligopolistic giants; working class resistance to pressure on wages (here, too, limits of tolerance!); inter-capitalist competition, narrowing the world market; independence movements in Third World.

Race against these limits: creation of a capitalist world market, ruled by the common international interests of capital—the multinational corporations, *their power*, transcending all national borders and ideological differences (business with U.S.S.R. and China); *but also*—a *new conflict* between the multinationals on the one hand, and the national interest on the other: 1) Exxon subsidiary in the Philippines 1973 refuses to sell oil to U.S. navy, wanted to enforce Arab boycott; 2) top five corporations increase share [of world capitalist economy—CR] from forty to seventy percent in fifteen years; 3) export of *production* and technology abroad to other areas with lower costs damages the U.S. economy—unemployment, negative balance of payment, building up of competitors; ITT makes foreign policy, undermines U.S. foreign policy; 4) obsolescence of the sovereign national state and its ideology—*another example* how capitalism in its *progress undermines its own foundations*—a) economically: disappearance of free competition and free enterprise; b) politically: weakening of national sovereignty.

At home in the U.S. the race against the *inner limits* of capitalism necessitates the production of ever more “superfluous” goods and services *and* necessitates *creation of the need to buy* these goods and services. Growing social wealth at the price of an ever more wasteful exploitation of energy (natural and human!) and of perpetuating full-time *alienated work* and alienated relationships between human beings. Aggressive struggle for survival when the achievements of capitalism could make this obsolete. At the same time: *present crisis*—increased mechanization creates technological unemployment, and business shrinks because of higher prices, the saturation of the market and decline of real wages. Capital counteracts this shrinking by the monopolistic imposition of high prices: *inflation, the cure??* (see Gunder Frank).

[Former U.S. President Gerald] *Ford's program*: the logical answer of neo-capitalism—help the rich, compel the poor to work harder. For example: Treasury Secretary *Simon* regarding the tax reduction “money must be channeled to families earning more than \$20,000 a year because they are the biggest buyers” (*Los Angeles Times*, January 22 [1975]); or *Ford*: it would be a mistake to penalize “middle income Americans” (*Los Angeles Times*, January 23 [1975]). And the time honored capitalist remedy: end the proliferation of such non-profitable services as “food stamps, social security, and federal retirement benefits” (*ibid.*) and cut down on *education* (no tax rebates). Why? In order to reverse the “downward side of corporate profits.”

For “the Administration fears drift to socialism” (Budget Director of Los Angeles, Ash, *Los Angeles Times*, January 26 [1975]). “Downward slide” of *which* corporations? The same papers report record profits of Exxon, Standard Indiana and California, Texaco, Mobil, and even the steel industry, banking, etc. Others will continue to depend on the huge government subsidies (Lockheed, PanAm, etc.)—which is of course *not* socialism! The program *wouldn't help* because the collapse of prosperity is rooted in the capitalist mode of production itself—its inevitable outcome—is socialism “inevitable?”

Capitalism, which once attained the most rapid and sweeping development of productive forces, *now* reproduces itself through their evermore destructive and wasteful development: global sale of arms, “unproductive” labor/white collar work, intensified repression and control of the population. The internationalization of capital would not solve anything: tied to the need for the maximization of profit it reproduces the conflict between rich and poor, *capital and labor*, on an international scale. The gap between rich and poor, the advanced and the backward countries, becomes larger. At the same time there emerges a competitive capitalism in the Third World: the power of the countries possessing vital material resources. Implied in this development is the danger of new wars, communist countermoves, and perpetual, vast “defense” budgets at the expense of welfare and real needs.

In Marxian terms *the conflict between the vast social wealth* in resources, goods, knowledge, *and its destructive, unequal, wasteful utilization*—all a part of the basic contradiction between modern socialized production and individual accumulation, a consequence of production for private profit. The general form of the internal contradictions of capitalism has *never been more blatant*, more cruel, more costly of human lives and happiness. And—this is the *significance of the Sixties*—this blatant irrationality has not only penetrated the consciousness of a large part of the population, it has also caused, mainly among the young people, a radical *transformation of needs and values* which may prove to be *incompatible* with the capitalist system, its hierarchy, priorities, morality, symbols (the counter-culture, ecology [movement—CR]). . . . The very achievements of capitalism have brought about its obsolescence *and the possibility of the alternative!*

The main prerequisites *are these*, already given: global planning of resources, production, allocation of labor; end of private enterprise, separation of [private—CR] ownership from control, automation, *qualitative* reduction of working time; possible conquest of scarcity, mastery over nature. They all point to the emergence of modes of social and personal existence freed from the prevailing repression, and [for the] possibility of correspondingly new institutions. But, in the established society bound to the requirements of profits, they are restrained, blocked, turn into their opposite: they increase the

enslavement of men and women by the means and modes of their labor. How long can this go on—the big question.

These are the prerequisites for the transition to socialism = the *objective* conditions. But: what about the men and women supposed to fight for it, who are the *subjects* of the socialist revolution? Evidently, if socialism is to be essentially different from capitalism in all aspects of life, then it can be fought for only by human beings who have *emancipated themselves* from the aggressive and repressive goals and values of capitalism, emancipated from the alienating effects of private property, who have no vested interest in the acquisitive society. No problem for Marx = the proletariat *free from* all these interests, and therefore *free for* socialism: impoverishment, material privation, misery—motive for revolution. (Later changed to “relative impoverishment”—the poorest strata of the working class were *not* the most militant ones! Other motives for revolution??) Moreover, when Marx wrote, the proletariat constituted the *majority* of the population, therefore: *democratic* transition, “democratic dictatorship!”

Today, in most advanced capitalist countries, this is no longer the case. The working class is not identical with “the proletariat” = its changed composition. For Marx: “proletariat” = blue collar, in the material production. And yet: no radical change without the class which is capable of changing the mode of production which reproduces the established system! At the same time, when these changes in capitalism occurred, the Marxian notion of socialism was revised: socialism was identified with replacing the capitalist mode of production by abolition of private ownership and control, [with] economic planning in order to construct socialism, and by the historical fact that the socialist revolution was successful in some of the most backward countries instead of in the most advanced ones.

The idea of socialism as the “leap into freedom” as qualitative change, the negation of capitalism, was defamed as “utopian.” . . . Marxist parties and groups are still clinging to notions and goals and strategies developed in the nineteenth century—neglecting to take into account the changes in the structure of capitalism and their impact on class struggle, and equally neglecting the new possibilities and qualities of building socialism at the highest stage of technology and productivity. That is why they are losing relation to reality, why so much of what they say sounds like sectarian jargon, why they are fighting each other rather than the common enemy.

[*Editor’s note:* At this point the thematic flow of the typescript breaks off with ending unfinished. It is followed by the two pages from the different typewriter (an earlier draft?—CR) elucidating in some detail the related sub-topics of energy crisis and food crisis, which I have inserted above. I believe Marcuse’s conclusion would offer a reprise of the vivid assessments expressed earlier in this address: “Capitalism destroys itself as it progresses! Therefore no reforms make sense. The notion that the society, *as a whole* is

sick, destructive, is hopelessly outdated, has found *popular expression*: ‘loss of faith’ in the system; decline in the work ethic, refusal to work, etc. . . . The general form of the internal contradictions of capitalism has *never been more blatant*, more cruel, more costly of human lives and happiness. And—this is the *significance of the Sixties*—this blatant irrationality has not only penetrated the consciousness of a large part of the population, it has also caused, mainly among the young people, a radical *transformation of needs and values* which may prove to be *incompatible* with the capitalist system, its hierarchy, priorities, morality, symbols. . . . The very achievements of capitalism have brought about its obsolescence *and the possibility of the alternative!*”]

NOTES

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1. *Editor’s note*: This is of course Marcuse’s translation from Marx’s German although he gives no citation as to the source. For context and a slightly different rendering see Karl Marx, “Economic Manuscripts [The *Grundrisse*, Notebook VII]” in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (New York: International Publishers, 1987), pp. 90–91 [also accessible at <http://marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch14.htm#iii4>]. For this source information I thank J. Jesse Ramírez, “Marcuse Among the Technocrats,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* Vol. 57. No. 1 [Heidelberg University], 2012. The material is also available in Martin Nicolaus’s translation and edition of Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 705.

2. *Editor’s comment*: Economist Stephen Spartan reminds us that the price shock on oil at that time was largely caused by U.S. policy which effectively devalued the dollar by allowing it to “float” relative to gold. Because oil was internationally priced in U.S. dollars, this meant there would be an increase in its nominal U.S. dollar price. Yet if one were paying for oil in gold, the amount of oil every ounce of gold could purchase would have remained constant. Seeing “Arabs” as the cause of the price shock was politically valuable to some U.S. policy makers. See also Douglas Dowd, *Inequality and the Global Economic Crisis* (London: Pluto Books, 2009) p. 117.

3. *Editor’s note*: This is of course Marx’s way of summarizing and denoting an essential insight: Total Capital (C) = constant capital (c) [fixed assets, raw materials, etc] + variable capital (v) [payroll for commodified living labor power].

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