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NST

a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

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Dockers News: The Struggle for Union Democracy in the Port of New York, 1949–1986

William Mello

Between 1949 and 1986, a group of radical longshoremen wrote, published, and distributed a newsletter in the Port of New York. In all that has been written about waterfront unionism, little attention has been given to *Dockers News*. *Dockers News* originated among longshoremen members of the Communist Party (CPUSA), active in the East Coast waterfront unions. Its influence extended beyond this small group of workers to many longshoremen dissatisfied with the union leadership and the working conditions on the docks. Although they counted support on various piers throughout the Port of New York, the group's main influence remained primarily on the Brooklyn docks. Through its intervention in waterfront politics, it became a voice not only of Communist longshoremen, but also of a large sector of dockworkers impeded from full participation in the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) organization on the waterfront. The group became a nucleus for radical longshoremen, and its presence on the waterfront was both respected and contested by other rank-and-file organizations.

Dockers News discussed and publicized grievances and demands that affected all longshoremen and attended to individual problems on a specific pier, motivating the independent action

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of workers. It helped transform the working conditions of longshoremen in spite of opposition from the ILA leadership. It was for almost forty years a voice of rank-and-file activism in one of the harshest sectors of U.S. industry, acting as a focal point and spokesman for workers who had nowhere else to turn.

Dockers News was an organization, and its influence on New York's dockworkers during the principal waterfront struggles of the 1950s and 1960s makes it important for the study of trade-union activism. The newsletter survived and circulated throughout the Port of New York in spite of opposition from the union, the employers, and the Waterfront Commission that dominated waterfront politics. It was a product of the subculture of independent action that was predominant among longshoremen.

While much has been written about the New York waterfront, the existence of *Dockers News* is only briefly mentioned in Vernon Jensen's book *Strife on the Waterfront* (1974) and by William DiFazio in his book *Longshoremen: Community and Resistance on the Brooklyn Waterfront* (1985), providing only a glimpse into the group's activity. For the most part, authors and scholars of waterfront history and politics have sought to minimize or ignore the political impact and legacy of CP activists in the Port of New York. This article draws on these works as well as the Annual Reports of the bi-state Waterfront Commission and the *Dockers News*. Copies of the newsletter were found in the personal collections of both active and retired longshoremen. In addition, I have relied on oral histories of the longshore activists, in particular those who participated in the *Dockers News* group. Some of the activists requested that their real names not be utilized, and I have honored their request.

Waterfront unionism

Independent rank-and-file action on the waterfront was a particularly difficult task. Activists confronted simultaneously the union leadership, the shipping companies, and the government. It was an environment in which a longshoreman could lose his livelihood or his life. The dominant culture of waterfront unionism consisted of corruption, violence, and political patronage that left the longshoremen to their own initiatives.

From the late 1920s, two basic aspects comprise waterfront labor politics in New York City. The first is the alliance between the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and local political elites, rooted in high levels of violence and corruption. Unions on the waterfront developed characteristics that set them apart from other trade unions in the United States. The second aspect was the increasing intervention of both federal and state political authorities that participated directly and indirectly in waterfront politics. Authorities devised mechanisms, specific legal legislation and institutions, with the specific task of structuring institutional action. The actions of the state and federal governments were an attempt to control the waterfront workers through the regulation of waterfront employment. This purpose became evident with the organization of the bi-state Waterfront Commission in 1953, created to regulate working conditions in the Port of New York. It was within this process that left-wing and radical longshoremen participated in the broader movement for reform of the waterfront labor process and intervened in waterfront politics, in particular the *Dockers News* group. They participated in formal as well as informal forms of organization and action. It was precisely their ability to balance their activity between these two forms of organization and action that enabled them to expand their influence.

Waterfront unionism developed within the broader culture of maritime workers. Given the harsh and violent working conditions to which dockworkers were often subject, they developed the notion that the only response to injustice and exploitation was through independent action, either individual or collective. The course of this rebellious culture went in two different directions. On the West Coast, with the militant unionism that developed under Harry Bridges and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), rank-and-file activism was channeled into strengthening the union; it occupied the formal and existent structure. In contrast, in New York, rank-and-file activism survived independently of all formal waterfront organization. Workers contested the policies of the union, the employers, and the government.

With the rise of Joseph Ryan to the presidency of the ILA in the late 1920s, corrupt leaders dominated New York's waterfront unions. A tight network of relations among the union, political elites, and employers distanced the union from its membership. For many years the union played a minute role in defending the interests of dockworkers. Furthermore, the waterfront unions discouraged and thwarted the participation of the rank and file. In his early study of waterfront labor, Edward Swanstrom wrote, "In various sections of the country the important decisions for the unions are made by the officers without much regard for or questioning the opinion of the rank and file of the men. . . . In the locals, in most cases, the process is much the same" (1938, 96).

A reflection of the alliance between the ILA and New York's political elite could be seen in the organization of the Joseph P. Ryan Annual Dinners, named after the ILA president. The chairman of the arrangements committee was William J. McCormick, an employer with influence in the Democratic Party. The guest list of these dinners between 1931 and 1951 included the names of many prominent politicians, such as Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt; Mayor James J. Walker; Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia; Police Commissioner Edward Mulroony; and the district attorneys for Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Shortly before the New York State Crime Commission was to convene, Borough President Robert Wagner was the vice-chairman of the annual dinner. During the event, political elites mixed with people such as John "Cockeyed" Dunn, who was later executed by the state of New York for murdering a longshoreman (Axelrod 1967, 58). A good example of the collusion between political elites and the corrupt leadership of the ILA was the readiness of politicians to defend Dunn. After he was convicted of coercion in 1941, some of the politicians spoke out for his early parole, among them City Councilmen Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Congressman George Tinkham of Massachusetts, who pointed to Dunn's "excellent reputation." The relationship between politicians and the ILA was profitable for both, involving political campaign contributions, protection of the pier rackets, negotiation of pier leases, and the use of the piers for job patronage (Axelrod 1967, 55).

Collusion and corruption between the union and employers were nothing less than criminal. Charged with the responsibility of investigating criminal activity on the docks, the New York State Crime Commission hearings traced approximately \$200,000 in improper cash payments to union officials made between the years of 1947 and 1951. Joseph P. Ryan, then president of the ILA, received \$7,500 from Daniels and Kennedy, a trucking and stevedoring company. Edward Florio, ILA organizer and president of Local 306, declared that he received \$12,000 from the Jarka Company and \$2,000 from the Nacirema operation for “not raising objections to certain irregular labor practices” (Axelrod 1967, 92). Corruption permeated the formal organization of New York longshoremen from top to bottom. Business agent Anthony Giantomasi (Joe the Gent) received \$100 a month, according to the testimony of a Jarka Company official, to “call the men’s attention when they were wrong and management was right.” Other examples of corruption include ILA business agents Vincent (Barney Cockeye) Brown and Anthony (Tony Cheese) Marchitto, who received \$50 each for every ship for which they supplied work gangs (Axelrod 1967, 93).

Another feature of waterfront unionism was the use of violence as a means of controlling the workforce. Violence was the mechanism used to instill fear in order to intimidate rank-and-file activism and eliminate opposition to the policies and practices of the union leadership. One of the most infamous cases was that of waterfront activist Pete Panto. While leading a campaign for union reform that coincided with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) organizing drive in the summer of 1939, Panto mysteriously disappeared. This occurred just two weeks after he had organized one of the biggest anti-Ryan rallies in New York. Approximately 1,500 longshoremen had participated in the demonstration (Kimeldorf 1988, 124). Later Panto’s body was found in a quicklime pit in New Jersey. This sent a message to other rank-and-file activists in New York who dared to challenge “King Joe.” In March 1941, Abe Reles, a known assassin for Murder Inc., confessed to the Brooklyn District Attorney William O’Dwyer that Albert Anastasia had ordered the murder of

Pete Panto. Further investigation of the waterfront unions uncovered large-scale corruption, kickbacks, extortion, theft, and loan sharking, which added up to hundreds of thousands of dollars from the rackets operated in the Brooklyn locals (Axelrod 1967, 23). Under pressure from the district attorney, Joe Ryan replaced Albert (The Enforcer) Anastasia with his brother Anthony (Tough Tony) Anastasia, making him appear to be in compliance with the authorities in the fight against waterfront corruption.

Although O'Dwyer had this information, he did not indict Albert Anastasia, and the Panto case was closed soon after. Daniel Axelrod, in his dissertation about the New York waterfront, wrote:

The Kings County Grand Jury that investigated the actions of then Mayor O'Dwyer stated, "The undisputed proof is that William O'Dwyer and Edward Hefferman, the assistant district attorney, were in possession of competent legal evidence that Anastasia was guilty of first degree murder . . . we find the 'perfect murder case' was presented and almost completed to the Kings County Grand Jury in May of 1940 by Hefferman who then suspended and abandoned the case. He stated that the case was dropped on instruction from his superiors." (1967, 30)

Memorializing Panto, *Dockers News* wrote, "He fought the bosses, their stooges in the union, and the gangsters who preyed on the men. . . . [A] contract was put out on Pete Panto by the companies, the corrupt union officials and their pals in the mob" (November 1979). The reaction of the Brooklyn longshoremen to Panto's disappearance was immediate. Italian dock workers demanded, "Dove è Panto?" [Where is Panto?], a question that appeared all over the piers of Brooklyn (Kimeldorf 1988, 125). Howard Kimeldorf pointed to a similar incident where "two rank-and-file activists were murdered gangland style in different parts of the city, only hours after meeting with Communist leader Sam Madell" (125).

Violence and corruption were central to waterfront unionism in New York. The city's waterfront unions assumed the role of a strong arm for employer control of the workforce. As Kimeldorf wrote, "Waterfront society was ruled by a coterie of gangsters

and corrupt union officials—a marriage of convenience consummated during the 1930s when Ryan began hiring powerfully built ex-convicts as union organizers to police the waterfront” (120). Another aspect used to control waterfront workers was the casual hiring of waterfront workers. Casual labor on the waterfront dates back to the colonial period of the United States. Maud Russell stated, “In the past carriers strode the streets, sometimes with bells, sometimes with wooden clappers, announcing the ships and calling for men along the shore” (1966, 7). The practice of hiring casual labor, known as the “shape-up,” became fundamental to guarantee the predominance of racketeer control of the waterfront labor market in New York. Casual labor served the interests of the shipping companies and racketeers alike. By creating a large surplus of labor, the employers were able to meet the need for a large workforce during the period of the industry’s peak demand while keeping labor costs low. The ILA’s control over the selection of the hiring bosses helped guarantee that the men worked to capacity. It also served as a means of levying kickbacks from the men and as a deterrent for any eventual worker revolt. In exchange, employers did not intervene in the pier rackets controlled by mobsters disguised as labor leaders.

In the aftermath of World War II, work on the New York waterfront became the center of intense class conflict when wildcat strikes continuously paralyzed the ports of New York and Brooklyn. Massive wildcat strikes became a way of life for New York’s dockworkers and the *Dockers News* was always present when not in the forefront. The demands raised by striking workers questioned the antidemocratic method used to select the Wage and Scale Committee, the corrupt shape-up system, the lack of seniority, and the “fixed” vote that had approved the contract. The wildcat strike movement represented a watershed in the movement to reform the ports of New York and Brooklyn. The wildcat strikes unleashed a new and significant power for longshoremen, the growing use of independent job actions demonstrating their ability to impose substantial economic damage on the shipping companies and expand their influence in the union’s decision-making process. For example, the assessment following the end of

the 1951 wildcat strike tallied 20,000 dockworkers idle, 130 piers shut down, work halted on 97, and an embargo on New York-bound rail freight. The strike held up approximately one billion dollars in imports and exports. In New York alone, approximately forty million dollars was lost, with \$300,000 per day in lost wages (Axelrod 1967, 311). The strike also had a chilling effect on the silent agreements between the ILA and the shipping companies. It became obvious that the ILA no longer had complete control of the workforce; no longer could the labor leaders guarantee labor peace. The combination of increasing worker revolt and wholesale extortion of the shipping companies by labor racketeers advanced the claims of political reformers to move for the creation of the bi-state Waterfront Commission. The Commission's control of the waterfront labor process also served as a harbinger as the question of automation was quickly being introduced into the waterfront labor process.

Controlling the waterfront: The Waterfront Commission

The bi-state Waterfront Commission was created in December 1953 as a result of recommendations made to Governor Dewey by the New York State Crime Commission hearings, and was signed into law by President Eisenhower in August of the same year. Its official task was to clean up hiring practices and end labor racketeering on the waterfront. The two main components of the Waterfront Commission were the operation of "Licensing and Information Centers" and "Investigation and Enforcement" responsible to police the newly enacted regulations. The Commission's Annual Report for 1956–57 stated, "The Commission was charged with re-establishing the dignity of longshoremen by freeing them from discrimination in hiring and from kick-backs, usury and other forms of oppression; with restoring ethical practices on the part of both management and labor representatives by eliminating bribery and extortion" (15). It was the stevedoring companies that financed the Waterfront Commission. As Maude Russell wrote, "The commission is financed by assessments levied on firms employing waterfront workers, and thus it really comes from the wages of longshoremen since shippers must

figure commission assessments as part of labor costs . . . it is not tax supported, but neither is it free” (1966, 275). One of the first activities of the Commission was to organize employment centers where dockworkers were assigned work by seniority, thus ending the infamous shape-up. While the Commission did make progress toward the decasualization of hiring practices, it was also a political implement used to control worker activism.

If American political life in the 1950s was marked by the infamous witch-hunts of McCarthyism, things were no different on the docks. Political control of dockworkers was an important factor given the importance of the New York waterfront in the U.S. economy. The control of the waterfront labor process was fundamental for the development and support of postwar U.S. foreign policy in Europe, such as the Marshall Plan, and later the Korean War. Working in conjunction with the Waterfront Commission, the U.S. Coast Guard would investigate active trade unionists and attempt to remove them from the waterfront by denying them a waterfront pass or Coast Guard pass that gave the workers access to the pier. Daniel Axelrod wrote, “To investigate subversive elements the Commission has worked with the office of Naval Intelligence, and the local police agencies as well as the Coast Guard, and has set up a special unit solely devoted to this task” (1967, 234). The Coast Guard intimidated workers by sending letters with wording such as: “There has come to our attention information of such nature as to warrant inquiry into your eligibility to hold a valid United States Merchant Mariners document” and “requests that you answer the interrogatories attached hereto.” What followed was the infamous question “Are you now or have you ever been an officer, or official, or a member of, or affiliated or associated with in any way, any of the organizations set forth below?” What ensued was a list in alphabetical order containing the names of almost 300 organizations. The final part of the interrogatory dedicated its last two pages to questions regarding activity in the Communist Party. Servio Mello, a long time activist on the waterfront recalled:

They would call you down, they held hearings . . . in an inquisition type of fishing expedition, so if you didn't

answer right they could take your pass away. . . . [T]hey tried with me, asking me if I was a member of the American Labor Party (ALP), whether I was a member of the Peace Committee, I had a whole damn hearing. Anybody who didn't face them out, who got scared, they would take your pass away. (Mello 1994)

The CIO, then full-steam in expelling Communists from its ranks, worked from within the labor movement, and added to the waterfront witch-hunt. Steve Rosswurm pointed out, "In the case of the Port Security Program, not only did the CIO acquiesce, but its affiliates helped initiate and administer what Murray's report in 1950 promised would be the 'most effective maritime security program ever devised'" (1992, 15).

Riding the wave of political witch-hunts and redbaiting, the Waterfront Commission eliminated many rank-and-file activists. It screened out dockworkers based on their political beliefs, taking advantage of the anti-Communist sentiment stirred up by McCarthyism. While relatively effective in persecuting rank-and-file longshoremens, the Commission did not seem to have the same efficiency at controlling labor racketeering. The real criminals it was supposed to screen out went virtually untouched. Approximately one-third of the officers of the ILA had criminal records according to the New York State Crime Commission investigation in 1953 (Russell 1966, 275). In spite of this, as Russell points out, "Early in the 10th annual report, 1963–1964 there is a long and alarming section on the evils of the loan shark rackets on the waterfront. The overall impression given is that the loan shark menace is widespread amongst longshoremens. Among the thousands of men working the port, the Commission in a year of intensive investigation had unearthed a total of two loan sharks" (275).

Rank-and-file activists did not view the Waterfront Commission as a viable means of change. Many radical longshoremens were screened out or suffered long-term unemployment while under investigation, and spent thousands of dollars in legal fees and long court battles to regain their waterfront passes. In reality, the Waterfront Commission did not seem worried about the gangsters who controlled the ILA, but about those who opposed

them. In this sense, the Commission's role helped to eliminate the left rank-and-file opposition. Pete Bel, a longtime rank-and-file activist argued:

The problems with the Waterfront Commission, the only way you could deal with that was to go public. Because we could try and influence public opinion. The Waterfront Commission was preventing, in a lot of instances, beefs from being settled on the piers. If there was a wildcat strike, if there was a disruption, the Waterfront Commission would be the first ones down and they always threatened to lift your pass. So in essence they were the ship owners' enforcer. They were doing a better job than the union officials. . . . I'll tell you I testified in June of 1964 at a State Senate Sub-Committee against them and in July they took away my pass. It took me \$3,600.00 and two and a half years of court fights to get my pass back. (DiFazio 1985, 49)

The Waterfront Commission, like the union, was a mechanism used to control the workforce. Through intimidation such as threatening to take away the longshoremen's waterfront passes, the Commission aided employers since the union was increasingly ineffective in deterring independent rank-and-file activism. The union, through physical intimidation, and the Waterfront Commission, through legal intimidation, were essential mechanisms of the waterfront labor process that deprived longshoremen of any formal recourse for seeking justice. The formal waterfront organizations served either to supply labor or to control the workforce. The question of control over the workforce became vital. The longshoremen were one of the most regulated sectors of the American working class in the private sector of the economy. As Kimeldorf explained, "[L]ongshore employment posed the question of control in the sharpest possible terms, for whoever controlled the hiring process quite literally ran the waterfront deciding who would work, for how long, and under what conditions" (1988, 29). In this sense, the dispute to control the workforce was fundamentally a dispute for the control of a vital sector of the U.S. economy.

Dockers News: Rank-and-file activists speak out

Historically, the notion of independent rank-and-file action has an element that the government, the shipping companies, and the union all have tried unsuccessfully to stifle. The longshoremen's subculture of direct independent action was reinforced by the fact that as a sector they had no means of redress within the formal structure of the shipping industry. The factors of this subculture were: the type of work, the need and use of brute force, and the casual work structure that kept waterfront wages extremely low. This served to propagate the rebellious culture that dominated the New York waterfront.

In the early 1950s, being a longshoreman meant being at the lowest level of the American working class. *Dockers News*, in its first issue in 1949, stated, "We dock workers earn our pay the hard way. Our work is the hardest, most backbreaking work you can find. The longshore industry has the second highest accident rate in the country yet we don't have adequate safety regulations or an adequate medical, pension or welfare plan. . . . The official figures of our employers, the New York Shipping Association (NYSA) shows that three out of four longshoreman earn \$10 per week or less." Given these conditions, the emergence of *Dockers News* was not only the workers' response to bad working conditions, but also the institutionalization of the workers informal subculture of independent action. It was a permanent organized response through informal means by which workers organized and influenced waterfront politics.

Dockers News, the political heirs of the 1930s Brooklyn Rank-and-File Committee led by Pete Panto, reflected the resurgence of radical longshore activism in the Port of New York after World War II. The ethnic composition of the group's activists reflected the same multinational diversity as the ships that they worked. They were white and black Americans, Hispanic, Scandinavian, Italian, and Portuguese. The cohesive bond that developed among them went beyond the political unity of their activity on the docks and the strong personal ties developed outside of the lives on the waterfront. Meeting regularly, they discussed the major issues confronting dockworkers as well as politics and the different

problems that were occurring on the piers. Once they decided on a course of action, the group's members shared the tasks of writing, printing, and distribution among themselves. In this way, *Dockers News* was able to enhance the radical culture of independent rank-and-file activism. In its issue on the fortieth anniversary of the murder of Pete Panto, *Dockers News* remembered the work of waterfront activists:

Pete Panto paid with his life. Others who came after him carried on the fight. Guys like Sampson from the West side, who led the fight against Joe Ryan, . . . Joe Banks, Cleo, and Adronicus Jacobs from local 968, black brothers who fought against discrimination and Joe Ryan's one man rule, . . . Fred Lezecki and Honest Abe from local 808 in Brooklyn (Bush and Green docks). (November 1979).

The newsletter circulated sporadically on New York waterfront for approximately forty years. As *Dockers News* activist Servio Mello explained:

It was distributed by hand in some places, different parts of the waterfront reflected different leaderships, some of the leaders were friendly towards *Dockers News*, in other areas they weren't and they would beat the shit out of you. Some areas you could go in, while in others you couldn't. We would go in front of the pier guardhouse . . . and drop it there. The guards would let it stay there. Still other places you would give it to individuals to distribute, or put it in bars near the waterfront. It was a very diversified type of thing. (1994)

An important reason for the group's long existence and ability to intervene decisively in waterfront politics was the high level of internal democracy and self-organization. Moreover, the group's form of organization and action represented the antithesis of traditional waterfront unionism practiced by the ILA. Gus Johnson, another rank-and-file activist with *Dockers News*, explained:

When there was a hot issue and something had to be done, we would sit down and discuss what the issue was and how

we could tap the anger of the men into a constructive way. The guys who put out *Dockers News* were all longshoremen, influenced by the left-wing longshoremen of the West Coast, and the trade union movement. . . . In the period 1953–54, with the red scare, it began to be distributed underground. The way that was done was to get the newsletter, use two or three cars, and hit different boroughs at two, three o'clock in the morning. Each time at a different time . . . put the newsletter on the floor, on certain corners or luncheonettes. What the average longshoreman would do was collect them and carry them down to the pier. The union officials never knew who was putting it out because everyone was reading it and everyone was holding it. It was a very well respected paper because it nailed down the issues. Through different means the men knew that the guys who were writing *Dockers News* were longshoremen. (1994)

Servio added:

At times of crisis we would go right to the shape-up . . . and you go in and hand out bundles to the men and they would give out the bundles. They realized that you couldn't stay there too long . . . that you had a message that wasn't welcome by the union. At most places it was well received, but in some places where the leadership was real rotten, where the guys were really oppressed and scared, they were afraid to pick it up. On the Army Pier, the guys there were very receptive. It went by different piers; on some the guys were very receptive. . . . The union leadership used to say that it was the work of communists trying to take over the waterfront, the agents of Harry Bridges, parrots of Moscow, etc. (Mello 1994)

The union leadership relied on redbaiting to scare the men from action and reduce the growing influence of the group. Anti-Communism was a long-used and common tactic in waterfront politics. About this DiFazio argued, "The reaction of the union to *Dockers News* has been to claim it is a communist newspaper that the great majority of the workers have ignored. The attitude has

been to view *Dockers News* as subversive to the best interest of the men and the union” (1985, 47). If the ILA really thought that the longshoremen were ignoring the proposals of *Dockers News*, however, there would not have been a need to offset its influence. The October/November 1962 issue of the *Brooklyn Longshoremen*, the newsletter of ILA Local 1814, stated, “There has never been any mystery about the purpose of the real loyalty of *Dockers News*. Since its very first issue its only interest has been to stir dissension, to manufacture grievances, to attack the ILA leadership. No one was fooled. . . . [T]he made in Moscow label was too transparent” (DiFazio 1985, 47). Even though the union leadership alleged that *Dockers News* had no influence, apparently they too were concerned about the impact that the rank-and-file newsletter was having on the piers. The ability of the rank-and-file movement to intervene in the work process, organizing worker response to both the union and the employer, was a fundamental part of life on the New York waterfront. *Dockers News* was more than just an informative newsletter or a watchdog group calling attention to the actions of the union leadership and the employers. By combining agitation with information the radical group was able to mobilize longshoremen, relying on the intuitive subculture of independent action. While the influence of *Dockers News* varied over its forty years of existence, its consistency highlighted the major struggles of New York’s dockworkers. As Servio pointed out:

We had a lot of men on different piers, basically because the issues were there, they were real, it wasn’t a grasp in the wind. . . . [I]f you knew what you were talking about the individual leadership on the piers would react favorably. So when we would say for example October 1st, if such and such doesn’t happen all hands out, they would do it, they would respect it and accept it as their own. (Mello 1994)

Frank DiLorenzo added, “*Dockers News* was such a hit because it was talking like the guy who was reading it; it was like he was talking” (1994).

A major moment of rank-and-file activity was participation in the 1961 elections of Brooklyn’s Local 1814, the largest ILA local in New York. Their electoral strategy was not to challenge the top

leadership of the local, but rather to run for the intermediary positions responsible for the daily contact between the workers and the union. In its September 1961 issue, *Dockers News* reported on the results of the election of Local 1814 held in June of that same year:

5340 longshoremen voted and cast almost 20,000 ballots in the June election for Local 1814 officers. Eleven incumbents ran for re-election and nine independents livened the contest for eight open delegate positions. . . . A combination of four men ran as a Unity Ticket. Two were Negro and two were white; . . . of the eight delegates elected only three could be identified with Tony Anastasia's machine, the five who won running as independents were:

- 1) Frank Matera, 36th Street Pier
- 2) Tony (Mom) DiNicola, Pier 7 Bush
- 3) Benny Terranova, 23rd Street (Mooremac)
- 4) Louis (the pipe) Amalfatone, 23rd Street (Mooremac)
- 5) Fred Small (past delegate), Breakwater

The men in Brooklyn voted for change in the way the men are treated by the delegates, in the way beefs are handled, a change in the "brush" policy of the local towards the shipping companies and the stevedores . . . the men in Brooklyn "have written on the wall" its time for change!

Servio explained the complex process of putting together the opposition slate where ethnic, racial, and political interests collided:

What happened in the 1814 elections was that Tony Anastasia was running the local. You can't blame Tony by himself, there were a whole lot of Italian families with different interests, and they wanted their own men. One guy wanted the Bush pier, the other guy wanted the downtown pier, and there was a division within the families caused by the process of consolidation of the Brooklyn locals. We got a group together that ran in opposition aimed at different sectors of the leadership. Freddy Smalls* was from the Breakwater, Tony's pier, and a good section of the families wanted Tony to dump him, to favor Italian guys.

We incorporated Freddy within the rank-and-file opposition, and we were pretty successful. Freddy got elected; some progressive Italian workers got elected as well. We elected Freddy Smalls and Frank Matera. We were able to dump the worst elements from the union, some of the crooked hats. This reflected a better composition for the union. (Mello 1994)

Gus added to the analysis of the electoral process in the local:

These were truly democratic elections, he had to run it on the up and up. The twenty guys that were there, represented different pieces of the machine so the only way he could make peace with them was to say, here you guys run, that's it. Who ever wins, wins. . . . [T]he front of the union looked like Times Square on New Years Eve, you had thousands of leaflets, hundreds of guys standing on corners. I never saw a scene like it before, when you brought some kind of democracy to the place, before that the delegates were all hand picked. (Johnson 1994)

Frank added. "Anastasia said 'we'll never hold elections like this again,' he said it right out, he lost a lot of his guys" (DiLorenzo 1994).

Gus continued:

The main reason for participating in the elections was to push our program, to fight for better working conditions for the men. . . . [T]he only thing we were immediately interested in was for direct benefits for the men from automation, safety sling loads, and democracy in the local, we weren't looking to overthrow the leadership of the local. (Johnson 1994)

Frank completed the analysis of strategy and goals: "We never thought about that, the main thing was the program and the working conditions on the piers" (DiLorenzo 1994).

The electoral process in Local 1814 signified a major rupture in the tight control that the ILA leaders had over the Brooklyn local. The electoral results gave the rank-and-file the legitimacy of worker support toward transforming waterfront unionism.

By the early 1960s, a major question confronted by New York longshoremen was the automation of the longshore industry. The containerization of cargo caused a large reduction in the workforce, while increasing the movement of cargo tonnage per hour, and reducing drastically the ships stay in port. The process of containerization was introduced at a rapid pace transforming the longshore industry, in William DiFazio's words, "from labor intensive to capital intensive" (1985, 31). In the early 1950s, there were approximately 48,000 dockworkers, moving 22 million tons, utilizing 46 million man-hours. In 1964, with the agreement between the union and employers that approved the containerization of the port, change came quickly. In one decade the work gangs were drastically reduced (Bel 1973, 14–15). As a result of the 1964 agreement, however, the longshoremen gained one of the most advantageous mechanisms to counteract the effects of automation; it was the Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI). The GAI guaranteed 2080 hours pay even when there was no work to be done. Until then no other sector of the American working class had reached this type of accord. At the initial phase of the agreement, less than 3 percent of the cargo handled was containerized, however, approximately ten years later about 73 percent of all cargo moved in the Port of New York was in containers. It was a form of permanent unemployment insurance for the sectors of the industry that were being displaced, paid for with a parcel of the profits that automation provided for the shipping companies. The rank-and-file activists during this period proposed a solution that would preserve the workforce. As Servio analyzed it:

It started on the West Coast, where the process of containerization went faster. Bridges was for some kind of agreement with the employers on the question of the containers. The employers knew they had the potential of modernizing the process. We asked for a six-hour day with no loss in pay as a means of not losing too many jobs with the process. On the West Coast they had a six-hour day with two hours overtime. We pushed for a real six hour day; a lot of the men were connected to the fight. (Mello 1994)

Frank completed Servio's analysis: "We were losing jobs. . . . [I]f you're going to cut the gang size, that's men you don't have to pay no more. So, what the hell were we going to get from it?" (DiLorenzo 1994).

Gus explained the workers motivation:

We said to the employers, it's your job to get work for us, either you get work for us or pay us. On the first vote, New York longshoremen voted against the GAI, Gleason annulled that vote and called another one, and the GAI won. The ship owners didn't know what they were getting into. . . . The process of containerization proceeded so fast, with such a large cut in man hours, they never thought they would have that big a pay out. (Johnson 1994)

In regard to the GAI and the longshore industry, it is remarkable that few other sectors of the American working class have been able to institute similar mechanisms. To this day the employers are obligated to a permanent responsibility for those workers, victims of the process of automation.

Another watershed in the struggle for democratic unionism remembered by the activists was for the struggle for the container bonus. This was money collected by the union through an arbitration award for the longshoremen. Despite federal intervention in the negotiation process, on the eve of 1 October 1968, the contract talks remained deadlocked. Employers kept insisting on their willingness to agree to the union's job security scheme (GAI) and to their pension and benefits demands only if the union would agree to "provide a steady workforce and end the abuses" (*New York Times*, 28 September 1968). The "abuses" that shipping employers referred to were the dockworkers' long-standing resistance to the NYSA's demand for workforce flexibility and the longshoremen's limited control of the container transportation process, such as the packaging and unpacking of containers in the port. The essence of the conflict was the workers control of the work process and not so much the economic aspects of the negotiations; as ILA President Teddy Gleason argued, "the money problem can be quickly solved" (*New York Times*, 28 September 1968). It is important to remember that while in 1968 container

ships comprised approximately 20 percent of the port's activity, it was projected that by 1975 they would account for 75 percent of all cargo transportation in the Port of New York (*International Freight Transport*, no. 6, 1967).

Added to the growing strike sentiment was the rank-and-file's discontent with the previous contract negotiations and distrust of the union leadership. The radical dockworkers argued that Gleason had "settled for the 3.2 percent wage guideline that the government had forced on us," while workers in other industries, such as steelworkers, teamsters, and machinists, had successfully broken the government's wage freeze (*Dockers News*, 27 September 1968). Moreover, the growing distrust of the ILA leadership's negotiating capacity was tied to claims of weak enforcement of seniority rights and the union's withholding the container royalty funds awarded to longshoremen. Under the banner "No Contract—No Work" the rank-and-file *Dockers News* demanded that the ILA Wage and Scale Committee disregard the government's wage freeze in the upcoming negotiations and that the Container Royalty Fund be distributed to longshoremen. "To hell with the wage freeze!" the newsletter declared, "To hell with the ship owners who are making millions out of the Vietnam War! To hell with those who would try to keep us from fighting for the welfare of our families! No Contract—No Work! All Out October 1" (*Dockers News*, 27 September 1968).

The strike occupied the headlines of most of the major national newspapers, such as the *New York Times* (*NYT*) and the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*). Following what appeared to be a well-organized ritual that had developed over the years, several hours before the 1 October contract deadline work on ports from Maine to Texas came to a standstill (*NYT*, 1 October 1968). Following the same routine as presidents before him, President Johnson invoked the Taft-Hartley Act. The act had been applied in every dock strike since its approval in Congress in 1947. In a White House statement President Johnson argued: "In terms of the impact of the strike government economists estimate that the strike would cost about \$70 million a day in terms of exports and imports; that wage losses for longshoremen and seamen would be about \$2 million a day." Furthermore, the federal

government argued that “the strike would have severe implications for our balance of payments” (*NYT*, 1 October 1968). At the Board of Inquiry hearing, employers estimated their direct financial losses at \$1.3 million a day and that approximately 2.8 percent of the nation’s jobs depended on the waterfront activity in one way or another (*NYT*, 2 October 1968).

The main issue of the job action, employers argued, was a response to their demand to assign dockworkers to any port in New York or New Jersey, which they argued would end the abuses to the GAI. Because of the limits on where a longshoreman was obligated to work, they continued, some longshoremen were receiving a full-year’s salary without working a single day (*NYT*, 1 October 1968). Gleason responded to the employer’s claims, arguing that the central issue was the process of automation. Hoping to divide container carriers and the break-bulk shipping carriers (loose cargo) in the negotiations, he offered to offset the losses of the break-bulk carriers by subsidizing their employment costs with money from the Container Royalty Fund (*NYT*, 2 October 1968). Gleason’s proposal did little to avert the judicial restraining order and subsequent injunction forcing dockworkers back to work once more, just three days after the strike had begun. His offer to subsidize the break-bulk shipping carriers did, however, spark a major revolt among New York’s dockworkers, who were not restrained for very long.

As negotiations resumed, Gleason expressed optimism that a new contract could be reached by 8 November, his birthday, and more than a month before the Taft-Hartley injunction was set to expire. Beyond unjustifiable confidence, Gleason’s expectation that a new accord would soon be reached demonstrated the increasing distance between the actions of the ILA leadership and the claims of rank-and-file dockworkers. Little did he suspect the birthday present New York’s longshoremen would give him. Disobeying the court injunction, on 31 October, a wildcat strike quickly spread throughout Port Elizabeth, Newark, and Brooklyn. Called by the *Dockers News* rank-and-file group, the activists denounced Gleason’s proposal to subsidize break-bulk shipping carriers with money from the Container Royalty Fund as “a steal,”

and called for a “container bonus holiday.” The *Dockers News* wrote: “We longshoremen who bust our asses climbing all over those containers stacked two and three high and who take all the chances when they buckle. We want the money! We have waited, we have listened to all the speeches, we are fed up!!! Now—Mr. Gleason we are telling you . . . we want the container money; we want it as a Christmas bonus. As a step to show that we mean business we are calling on all rank-and-file longshoremen to stay home on October 31, 1968 . . . it is time we went on strike for ourselves!” (Jensen 1974, 378). The radical dockworkers argued that a similar fund on the West Coast distributed \$1,200 annually to each longshoreman.

The ILA leadership was surprised by the speed with which the job action spread. On the first day of the wildcat strike approximately half the ships in New York harbor remained idle. “I can’t comment,” Gleason stated, “since I don’t know anything about it. But they’ll be back at work tomorrow” (*NYT*, 1 November 1968). According to reports in the *Wall Street Journal*, in spite of assurances from the ILA leadership to the federal government and employers that all work would resume the following day, the movement continued to spread and by the second day the piers of Jersey City and Hoboken were also paralyzed (5 November 1968). According to the Waterfront Commission, approximately 3,500 longshoremen were involved in the work stoppage (*WSJ*, 6 November 1968). Unable to control the wildcat work stoppage, Assistant U.S. Attorney General for the Southern District demanded that the FBI begin an immediate investigation into the strike (*Journal of Commerce*, 5 November 1968).

The employers also expressed surprise with the job action. A NYSA spokesman declared that he could not remember another instance in which a strike had occurred while a Taft-Hartley injunction was in effect (*WSJ*, 5 October 1968). The NYSA demanded that Attorney General Ramsey Clark take immediate action against the rebellious dockworkers in what they called a “flagrant violation of the existing Taft-Hartley injunction” (*NYT*, 2 November 1968). The strike also demonstrated the willingness of the ILA leadership to revert to methods of coercion and violence

that were commonly used during the presidency of Joe Ryan, and fighting erupted between striking dockworkers and ILA loyalists. For example, the *New York Times* reported that at the Grace Line terminal in Port Newark struggles broke out after 200 striking dockworkers attempted to stop banana handlers from working. The Waterfront Commission quickly threatened striking dockworkers, warning that it would act “swiftly,” suspending the registration of any dockworker “engaged in acts of violence, intimidation or coercion” (*NYT*, 5 November 1968) The commission’s warning, however, did not seem to apply to the ILA leadership’s campaign against the rebellious longshoremen. *Dockers News* activist Gus Johnson remembers:

In Brooklyn the union used strong-arm tactics by locking the men on to the piers, like on Pier 5. On the 37th Street pier they pulled up the gangplank and wouldn’t let the men off the ship. Whatever the men’s participation was, there was no work done for five days. (1994)

After a week-long strike, the rebellious longshoremen returned to work and shortly thereafter the ILA distributed \$6 million to dockworkers as a Christmas bonus. The strike had two immediate results. First, striking dockworkers were able to block Gleason’s attempt to entice break-bulk shipping employers with funds that were destined for the longshoremen as compensation. Second, it sent a message to the ILA leadership that the rank-and-file Left was also a force that had to be considered.

Radicals and labor racketeers

The relationship between the radical longshoremen and the union leadership was based on direct action that continually called attention to the workers grievances and demands. The generalized corruption of the union officials and their proximity with the employers did not impede their relationship with the ILA leadership. As Gus explained it:

We had a pretty good relationship with the union leadership, even though we would criticize them in union meetings, we were always principled about outside intromission

like the FBI, or the Waterfront Commission. We didn't want anything to do with them, we felt it was the men who had to change the situation in the union. (Johnson 1994)

This did not mean that the relationship was anything near diplomatic, as Frank pointed out:

The local leadership used to try and intimidate us, they would put stooges on the piers to try and find out who was leading the movement. I remember one time a union leader came down with one of these mob guys and called the leaders on the pier to find out who were the guys causing the work stoppage. (DiLorenzo 1994)

The *Dockers News* group did not isolate themselves from the formal institutions of waterfront politics, which held considerable influence over the majority of dockworkers. There was a daily working relationship between radicals and the ILA leaders based on mass rank-and-file action. This relationship permeated the politics of waterfront unionism at different levels, informed by the notion that the Waterfront Commission and other state and federal agencies targeted radicals and union leaders alike.

Conclusion

The waterfront of New York and Brooklyn was the center of intense struggles between labor and capital. It was also the center of a unique form of confrontation between workers and their formal means of organization, the union. This was not just the common corrupt union official, a problem that has plagued other sectors of the trade-union movement. Unlike other employer-dominated unions that try to hide their relationship with employers, the waterfront unions of New York and Brooklyn did not. The role of waterfront unionism was clear: to control the workforce and pier rackets, commit extortion, and get kickbacks. State and federal authorities, through the bi-state Waterfront Commission, also sought to control waterfront workers too. The creation of the Waterfront Commission, after the 1951 wildcat strike that imposed serious economic damage on employers, intervened in one of the largest sectors of the U.S. economy, which was

the waterfront. Never have any other private-sector employees been subject to such rigorous systems of control. The union, the employers, and the government all sought to control the waterfront labor process.

It is important to note that *Dockers News* originated and survived within a political context unlike most American trade unions; the political fault line for waterfront unionism was distinct. While in most unions conflict was divided along the traditional notions of “them and us”—“them” meaning the employers and “us” indicating the workers and their union—for dockworkers the fault line was drastically wider. For longshoremen, “them” included not only the shipping companies, but also state and federal political authorities and the ILA; while “us” was conceived as the rank and file structured upon informal devices, a concept not unique to radical workers. Rather a substantial sector of the New York longshoremen alternately employed the strategy of independent worker action. One particular fact that highlights the subculture of independent action was that dockworkers struck not only for better contracts and working conditions. They used their ability to strike as a means of intervening in the union’s decision-making process to change union policy. A weapon that was traditionally used to impose economic pressure on employers became a weapon that workers used to impose policy changes within their own organization.

The wildcat strikes on the post–World War II waterfront merged economic demands with the claim for greater union democracy. In this sense, union democracy was not an isolated political claim; rather it was interconnected to the basic economic interests of dockworkers. The job actions were directed toward the union and employers alike. Specifically in the case of the container bonus strike, the job action was a direct confrontation between workers and the union. The strike was against a decision taken by the ILA leadership. The long years of collusion between the union and the shipping companies had left a vacuum in the political role normally exercised by the union. *Dockers News* assumed the unoccupied space reserved for worker representation at its most basic level, not only energizing independent rank-and-file action, but also as a

result of it, survived for almost forty years. Its underground work was a necessity because of the control and coercion dockworkers were subjected to by ILA leadership and political establishment. Through consistent mass action and presence, the rank-and-file activists institutionalized the existence of an informal entity. There was no nominal responsibility for *Dockers News*; it appeared on the waterfront when the workers “had a beef.”

Unlike many other rank-and-file opposition groups, the *Dockers News* group did not see their activity as a means of taking over the union leadership. Their relationship with the corrupt union officials was based on obtaining that which was beneficial for longshore workers independently of where or who was providing the benefit. While the relationship existed, it was not readily accepted by all sectors of the union leadership who many times sought to resolve things “the old way.” As one activist said, “When a union official asked who was the rank-and-file, the answer was clear, we’re all the rank-and-file, everyone had a copy of *Dockers News* in his hand” (DiLorenzo 1994).

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NOTE

*Fred Smalls was an African American longshoreman and union delegate.

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Orientalism and the U.S. Empire: A Reading of Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive*

Joel Wendland

Roots of American Orientalism

Just as anti-Black racism and national oppression of Native Americans have long histories, anti-Muslim and anti-Arab attitudes in North America are not recent inventions of the Bush administration and its global “crusade” against Islamic terrorists. Indeed, anti-Muslim hate is as old as the country itself. In 1785, just a few years after the United States separated itself from the British Empire, Virginia governor, slaveholder, and land speculator Patrick Henry ordered the deportation of three people from the country under suspicion of being spies. According to accounts of the event, the three people—one woman and two men—were found in possession of Hebrew-language documents. Though Virginia authorities could not read Hebrew and discern the contents of the documents, they ordered the three strangers deported back to their country, “wherever that was” (Allison 1995, 3–6).

Algerian-based pirates captured a handful of U.S. vessels that same year to alert the new government to its responsibility to pay tribute to the Algerian government in order to do business in the Mediterranean. To exert their own control over Atlantic and Mediterranean trade, the British and French promoted hysteria about North African and Muslim infiltrators and the escapades of the “Barbary Pirates.” Fears of invasion prompted draconian

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Alien and Sedition laws at the state and federal levels, giving the executive authority to deport suspicious foreigners by the late 1790s. Xenophobic views of North African Arabs and fears of infiltration converged with and contributed in no small part to the construction of a consensus on who could be considered a “real” American. The 1790 Naturalization Act sought to define the United States as a socially harmonious and racially homogeneous society by admitting only “the worthy part of mankind” who could both prove their good character and their racial whiteness (quoted in Takaki 1993, 69–70).

This anti-Islamic and anti-Arab hysteria was both fed by and prompted the production of anti-Islamic and anti-Arab attitudes as important themes in emergent U.S. literature. In the first two decades of the new country’s life, a spate of books about captivity in Islamic countries (mainly in North Africa) as well as novels like *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania* by Peter Markoe (1797) disturbed the American consciousness. Markoe’s tale, with its pretense of having been authored by an Algerian sent to report on the state of affairs in the United States and to aid Algeria in exploiting the new country’s vulnerable shipping industry, lacked artistic merit. Along with the more critically acclaimed and financially successful *The Algerine Captive* published by Royall Tyler in 1797, it was among the first original North American novels with major anti-Muslim and anti-Arab themes (Davidson 1985, 85). North American literary experts favor Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive*, both because its author saw it as a self-conscious effort to promote and develop a U.S. national culture in literary form and because his work had enormous influence on subsequent U.S. writers. This book requires special attention.

The Algerine Captive is the story of Updike Underhill, the scion of a middle-strata farm family whose ancestry stretches back nearly to the foundation of the British colonies. Expressing the ambitions of the petit bourgeoisie, Updike studies medicine and seeks to secure economic independence. Failing to do so, he takes a position as surgeon aboard a slave-trading ship bound for Africa, where he is subsequently captured and enslaved by Algerian pirates. After several adventures in Algiers, where he is

held, and an unlikely trip to the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina, he wins his release with the aid of an Algiers Jew and returns to the United States. It should be noted that Tyler invented the tale wholly out of travel accounts, other captivity tales, and European histories of the Middle East.

Tyler's novel is saturated by the Orientalist discourse that Edward W. Said extensively studies in his important book, *Orientalism*, though it is left uncommented on by the late eminent scholar (1978). It should be noted, as Said points out, that while the North African Islamic country of Algeria may not be geographically "Oriental," Islam, was a cultural, political, and geographical entity that defied European notions of East and West. From its origins, Islam posed "an unresolved challenge" to European imperialism and its cultural sense of superiority, mainly because the European empires failed to subjugate Islamic empires and countries for centuries. But an additional reason for this special interest is that Islam had conquered portions of Europe, its proximity to Europe (as with North Africa), and the fact that it continues to overlap sites of special interest for Europeans such as the "Holy Land" (Said 1978, 71–72).

Orientalism, as a system of thought and institutional practices of producing knowledge of and "creating" the Orient as a means of demarcating boundaries of identity between East and West, civilized and "other," and also primarily aiding the Empire in subjugating it, easily took root in the North American continent. Indeed, the name Indian, as Lawson suggests, was a sign of Columbus's search for the Orient in 1492 and his projection of constructed images of the Orient onto the land and the people who inhabited it (1968, 156). Despite notions of freedom and liberation spread in the American Revolutionary War and construction of the country, the English and French bodies of knowledge of Islam and the East took root at the great universities of the United States. While U.S. cultural producers, from political thinkers to novelists, highlighted what they viewed as political, cultural, and religious differences with their former imperial master and Europe as a whole, when it came to a posture toward Islam, liberty-loving North Americans sided with

the European point of view out of racial solidarity couched in civilizational terms.

Said argues that the Orientalist project is engaged in a self-described scientific and objective process of knowledge gathering. It is “anatomical and enumerative” and “engaged in particularizing and dividing of things Oriental into manageable parts” (1978, 72). We see this posture in Tyler’s fabricated presence in Algeria whose authority and truthfulness is crafted and asserted repeatedly, but is constructed entirely out of the second-hand accounts of European scholars and explorers. Despite his enslavement in Algiers, Updike Underhill, Tyler’s narrator and protagonist, finds time to provide details of different aspects of the culture of the city, mainly discovered through eavesdropping or through unnamed informants. For example, in one chapter the reader finds a typical wealthy household described in detail. In other chapters, Tyler presents a systematic fictional discourse on the basic tenets of Islam, descriptions of both Arabic and the vernacular language, and an analysis of the demographic makeup of the population of Algiers, including an anti-Semitic detour on Algerian Jews. Tyler provides a sketch of the city “obtained on the spot” (1797/2002, 161), an outline of the country’s history and geography, a survey of the political system, cultural customs, and economy, and so on. Tyler’s narrator offers an image of Algeria and Algiers to his readers even down to the military defenses of the city,

In addition to dissection, writes Said, the Orientalist “makes the Orient speak,” an effort that proceeds out of imperialist first causes and interests. In the case of *The Algerine Captive*, a European convert to Islam speaks of its mysteries to Updike in Latin. The production of the “Algerine” image, as Updike makes clear, proceeds out of the practical needs of the United States, otherwise it would have remained invisible. The problematical financial and trade relationship of the United States with Algeria (the piracy issue), the loaded contrast between Islam and the United States as a means of illuminating it as a domestic problem for the United States, the contrast of a “despotic” and decaying Islamic civilization with a vibrant, liberty-loving Christian society are Tyler’s central purposes for taking up this subject matter. Underhill’s

return to the United States encourages in him feelings of the need and the ability of the United States to unite and use its strength “to enforce a due respect among other nations” (1797/2002, 226). Into the competition for empire and the exertion of dominance over the Orient, Tyler cast the new American.

This new American is only partially constructed in opposition to the Algerian “other.” A close reading of Tyler’s novel uncovers its “Orientalist” project and reveals how Tyler imagined the European-produced representation of Islamic and Arab worlds was linked to North American genocide of Native Americans in the drive for land, the enslavement of Africans, and the internal class conflict, all of which fractured the imaginary social harmony of the new country. In fact, the Orientalist posture of asserting imperial power through knowledge production, of transforming the object of study into something less than human through the projection of comprehensible and manageable images, comprises the bulk of the scholarly work Tyler studied to produce this novel. It might be said that centuries of European Orientalism and its fraught struggle for domination of the East informed how Tyler came to view U.S. national identity and the peoples subjugated within its social and physical geography.

Relationships of domination and subjugation do not leave the colonizer innocent and unchanged, however. In his study of the relationships between culture, class, and empire in European and North American history, *The Hidden Heritage*, Marxist cultural critic John Howard Lawson astutely noted, “No one in an exploitative society is truly ignorant of its character. The pretense of innocence is itself a symptom of moral sickness” (1968, x). But “pretense of innocence,” is at the heart of claims of victimization at the hands of the “other,” and its logical corollary of speaking for the “other” is the cultural thread that runs through the history of the U.S. empire. This pretense was ingrained in the first literature produced in the newly minted United States, and resonates today as the pretense drips from the lips of President George W. Bush denying the atrocities of the war in Iraq and the imperialist goals of his administration.

The exploited and oppressed talk back to and struggle against the brutality and domination of the empire. While imperial

authority claims that “[p]eople condemned to servitude or destruction can have no valid past, no culture worth saving, no enduring social achievement,” Lawson argues, they cannot be silenced forever. Their history and culture are ever present. Lawson continues, “The people of the abyss are not literally separated from the exploiters: on the contrary, they are present and indispensable. For example, the Negro is so much and so threateningly a presence in the South that he has shaped and possibly dominated the consciousness of Southern whites. The continuing exploitation of the Negro has an incalculable effect on attitudes, ideas and arts in the Northern United States” (1968, x). In a speech delivered in early 2006, Cuban National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcón also noted that capitalism creates a boundary-breaking global process: “The third world penetrates the first. The latter needs the former and at the same time rejects it. In Europe and North America appears an undesirable protagonist, a mute guest that demands its rights” (2006, 24). While it is only possible to impose the implications of such terms as “Third World” onto the eighteenth century with great difficulty, the global processes Alarcón is describing had already begun. Alarcón’s point, useful to this paper, is that imagined essential boundaries between cultures and identities have been eroded not only by exploitation and oppression but also by struggle and resistance.

Tyler’s background and social context

Royall Tyler was the heir to a substantial fortune made in the import business (mainly in trade with England) in Boston, Massachusetts. Tyler’s father was a politically conservative proponent of the U.S. Revolution, according to Tyler’s biography. He relished exploiting his workers and advocated imprisoning the homeless in workhouses, but loved to pretend to share their interest in social mobility and liberty. Tyler, himself, was a bit of a profligate who fathered a child out of wedlock, failed to win the hand of future U.S. President John Adams’ daughter through his laziness and his inability to keep his nose clean, squandered his inheritance, and anonymously authored pornographic poetry. While none of these qualities would necessarily earn him much

social disapproval in the modern age, it was, at the time, a significant departure from the morals and character professed to be ideal (Crain 2002).

Tyler spent a brief period during his college years as an aide to a minor Revolutionary War commander and eventually aligned himself with the conservative Federalist Party after the war (Crain 2002, xix). Tyler's claim to political fame was his role in bringing an end to the notorious Shays's Rebellion, launched in Massachusetts in late 1786. Daniel Shays led an armed uprising of indebted farmers who sought relief from the economic depression, high rates of debt, and regressive taxation that forced many farmers to lose or sell much of their property, undermining or risking their political rights and independent identities. Many viewed the credit system as means by which land speculators forced smallholders into selling out (Zinn 1995, 90–94; Aptheker 1990, 144–47). Tyler served as a go-between for the authorities to the leaders of the rebellion. While pretending sympathy for Shays and his cause, Tyler succeeded in convincing neighboring states not to provide aid or refuge to Shays and his band and eventually forced his capture (Davidson 1985, 192–200).

The Shays uprising was part of a wave of armed protest in Massachusetts, several neighboring states, and as far south as Virginia. In Rhode Island, for example, an army of debtors took over the legislature and printed and distributed paper money (an attempt to reduce interest rates and stimulate economic activity). Both the central government and wealthy elites financially supported the suppression of these rebellions. The threat of violence from the rabble convinced the Federalists (and Tyler) that, instead of reexamining the credit and taxation systems to ensure a degree of equality and fairness, a stronger, more conservative constitutional form of central government that reserved the lion's share of power to the wealthy was in order (Zinn 1995, 90–94). Fear of insurrection was so strong that some aligned with the Federalists talked of installing a military-backed dictatorship (Beard and Beard 1941, 308).

Federalists were suspicious of democratic forms of government and favored the rule of elite property holders. This perspective,

while it contradicts current popular views of the egalitarian character of life in the early United States, was fueled by stark class differences and interests. Historical studies show that a small class of landholders owned the vast majority of property, and social ills such as unemployment, indebtedness, homelessness, and absolute impoverishment affected a growing number of Americans (Nash 1991, 208–12).

The wave of violent protest in late 1786 and early 1787 against exploitation and the rule of the wealthy that included Shays's Rebellion was not the only conflict that rocked early U.S. society. Five years before Shays led his ill-fated movement, Samuel Ely was charged with treason for leading an armed uprising in Massachusetts against the unfair debt system and taxes (Aptheker 1990, 143–44). In 1794, a group of whiskey makers in western Pennsylvania blackened their faces or dressed as Indians and assaulted federal government tax collectors. A force of 13,000 U.S. army troops ordered into action by President George Washington put down the rebellion. Local residents sympathetic to the rebellion were angry about tax collection and the failure of the federal government to defeat and expel local Indian peoples. Again the acquisition of land appeared to favor disproportionately the wealthy, and many landless or small-holding whites expressed class hostility with attacks on Indian settlements. Wealthy land speculators and other elites saw such attacks on Indian land as both a means to opening new tracts of land for acquisition and for alleviating lower-class anger (Slaughter 1986).

Conflict with local Indian groups often resulted in bloody violence and genocide. The act of transgressing racial and civilizational boundaries by dressing as Indians or Africans during the revolt should be read as more than simple disguise. It was the performance of a temporary identity with the most marginalized populations in America as a signification of what taxation, debt, and landlessness do: they make free people into slaves or outcasts. But it was also an implicit hint at the ferocity of resistance by these marginalized others whom the white rebels sought to emulate and invoke. The culture of rebellion, racial transgressions and identities, and class politics would force its way into Tyler's literary

work. In other words, the “people of the abyss” could not be silenced by this conservative advocate of fictive social harmony.

Harvard-educated Tyler studied and practiced law. Despite several terms on Vermont’s Supreme Court, Tyler spent his days relying on the charity of his neighbors. But in addition to this disastrous private life, Tyler managed to write financially and critically successful drama and novels that may be considered among the foundational texts of North American literature. In her study of the novels of the new republic, Cathy Davidson notes that writing and reading novels in the late eighteenth century should be considered a subversive act. High-brow culture rejected the novel as a trite form of expression filled with immoral and lurid images that weakened morals and devalued a culture (1985, 30). That Tyler chose such a genre for his most accomplished work signals both an overt rejection of European tastes while transforming a subversive medium into a conservative tool for bourgeois cultural hegemony.

Social harmony or conflict?

In the preface to *The Algerine Captive*, the novel’s narrator Updike Underhill comments on the rise of books “designed to amuse rather than to instruct” in New England. Noting that English novels promote either “vice” at worst or “an erroneous idea of the world” that puts North American culture in a bad light at best, Underhill suggests that his own novel is an attempt to portray positively New England values as part of an emergent literature published in North America for a North American audience. Though Underhill reproduces the commonly held belief that women, believed to be the main consumers of novels, are victims of the moral perfidy inherent in English novels, he also imagines a society of readers composed of both men and women. In this setting, “the worthy farmer,” “Dolly the milk maid,” and “Jonathan, the hired hand,” have discarded highbrow European culture for books of “amusement.” This market of readers, a formerly female inhabited social space, could be invaded, captured, and colonized by North American authors and publishers, a decidedly masculine social space, suggests Underhill, in a process of establishing

and promoting the culture unique to the new country. Benedict Anderson's well-known thesis about the link between the rise of print capitalism and the emergence of nationalism and national cultures clarifies Tyler's understanding of the role of print capitalism in fostering U.S. national identity (Tyler 1797/2002, 5–7; Anderson 2002).

But this identity is from the outset of this novel imagined through a bourgeois lens. The social conflict and Native American genocide on the frontier, the class rebellions, and presence of hundreds of thousands of African slaves are erased or silenced in this fictional social harmony of readers. *The Algerine Captive*, combining the two main genres of books for amusement—the novel and the travel narrative—is consciously aimed at this “imagined community” of readers, both to replace esoteric European culture and to foster what literary critic Raymond Burke once called “identification” (1969, xiv). Tyler's challenge is to create a new North American literature that cultivates identification of his readership with a set of values and customs that he calls peculiar to New England and that eliminates or silences the dissenting voices through erasure. In fact, the genre itself, the novel as a tale of coming to self-consciousness of a character who explicitly identifies himself as an imagined normative New Englander, demarcates the frontiers of North American identity in a manner that restores order out of chaos and social peace out of violent conflict.

Tyler invents the novel as the myth of bootstraps.¹ In contrast to the author's own experience, Updike Underhill is the son of a struggling farmer with signs of intellect who attracted the attention of his schoolmaster, a local minister, who convinced Updike's father to allow him to tutor Updike specially in preparation for higher education. Eventually, Updike learns medicine, and alternates between earning his living as a schoolmaster and a doctor, neither of which initially offers the economic security he imagines, but that ultimately lead to his travels, eventual captivity, and future career as a “man of letters.” It is a social trajectory marred by instability and setbacks, but it is a far cry from his ditch digging in the early pages of the novel. In fact, the reader is led to suspect that once Updike has become reconciled with the social harmony

—the united, ordered imagined national community—his fortunes will become settled and secure.

Updike's father, despite employing several "hired men" on the farm, initially pleads poverty when approached by a local minister who wants to tutor Updike, but eventually yields and borrows significant amounts of money to pay for Updike's education. This account of Updike's initial experience with education humorously treats the divide between overeducated intellectuals and ordinary folk. The minister teaches Updike Greek for four years. Although the beauty and poetry of this dead language "move Updike," people around him are unimpressed.² In a series of episodes that project the narrator protagonist as the prototypical ally of the laboring classes and give life and authority to a practical Yankee identity, Updike deploys his knowledge of Greek in settings inhabited by working-class people. On his father's farm, Updike occupies his mind with the poetry of Homer, where this preoccupation "eradicated love for labour" (Tyler 1797/2002, 29). In a local tavern, Updike's Greek diversions cause a serious misunderstanding among the "young men of the town" who found his "descant upon Xanthus" during a discussion of racing horses incomprehensible (32).

Updike's obsession with Greek also produces disaster in his interaction with women. Invited on one occasion to mingle with local young women, Updike "thought this a happy opportunity to introduce Andromache," a pedagogical effort met by a "stupid stare." Updike's attempts at elevating his peers are derailed by more youthful entertainment. As the evening winds down, Updike is led to believe that one of the young women might be interested in having him walk her home, but Updike turns down the offer because he is unable to think of the precise courting sentiments in Greek (32–33). On another occasion, an older woman, "attempting to ward off the invidious appellation of old maid," expresses interest in Updike by borrowing and reading his books "with astonishing rapidity." Initially Updike is impressed with her eagerness to learn, but after she asks for a book using a pornographic reference rather than its scholarly title ("*Rolling Belly Letters*" instead of Rollins's *The Method of Teaching and Studying the Belle Lettres*),

Updike rushes out of her house in a panic, ending his efforts at romantic love (54).

Having obtained important esoteric knowledge, Updike takes a position as schoolmaster and he looks forward to elevating the thoughts and character of the local children. Unfortunately, his students have little interest in what Greek has to offer. In addition, the wages of a schoolmaster fail to provide “independence,” and Updike is forced to collect his livelihood in the form of “a half of peck of corn or rye” from local families (34). Updike quickly comes to “sorely regret the mispense of time” in learning Greek (33). His father, by contrast, “a plain unlettered man, of strong natural abilities,” questions the value of education that fails to provide practical knowledge, and he admires more the person “who invented printing, discovered the magnetic powers, or contrived an instrument of agriculture, that should abridge the labour of the husbandman” (27)

This gentle mocking of the impracticalities of higher education serves the specific purpose of disguising the class basis (and its incumbent power differential) of higher education through a rhetorical elevation of the wisdom and culture of the ordinary folk. (Ironically, the construction of this novel required access to both English- and French-language studies of Islam, North Africa, and the Middle East, since the narrator’s claim to personal experience was fabricated.) Tyler’s rhetoric of the common folk contrasts sharply with typical view of the people shared by many Federalist elites such as Alexander Hamilton, who, in describing the “imprudence of democracy” and calling for rule by elites, wrote:

The voice of the people has been said to be the voice of God; and however generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true in fact. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. (quoted in Zinn 1995, 95)

Is Tyler simply a more democratic-minded person than Hamilton? Davidson suggests that the loss of his inheritance and the instability of his career late in his life may have influenced Tyler to more expansive views of “the people.” Whatever Tyler’s

fortunes later in life, Tyler's literary sympathies at the time the novel was published are belied by textual evidence. He massages class antagonisms and openly calls for social harmony within the existing social framework. The message, themes, and procession of this novel serve primarily the project that Hamilton pursues, but through "identification" and imagined community and without the overt coercion implicit in Hamilton's outlook on how to maintain the social harmony. Tyler's discourse consciously strives to acquire the consent to be ruled from the worthy farmer, Jonathan the hired man, and Dolly the milkmaid.³

Genocide as motif

Class hostilities are not the only influence on Tyler's novel. There is little doubt that few of Tyler's real New England readers would have misconstrued the racial identities of Tyler's imaginary readers—the worthy farmer, Jonathan the hired man, and Dolly the milkmaid. While the military defeat of large-scale Native American armed resistance to the land-hungry U.S. empire would happen a century after Tyler, Native Americans in the geography of Tyler's novel are confined to a spatial-temporal wilderness past. The fact that this captivity narrative—in contrast to several major, widely read Native American captivity narratives—takes place in North Africa is no small comment both on the forced disappearance of many Indian nations in New England and the discursive silencing and marginalizing of the history that caused that disappearance of those who remained. Early in the story, the narrator relates his mother's dream that Indians had kidnapped him. About this recollection, Updike remarks, "she had the native Indians in her mind, but never apprehended her poor son's suffering, man years as a slave, among barbarians, more cruel than the monsters of our own woods" (23). The remark is suggestive of the native's disappearance in that neither scenario seems likely—and the Algerian captivity, offered as fact in the narrative, was also concocted.

In real life, by the turn of the nineteenth century, only perhaps two thousand members of various Indian groups remained in New England. Forced expulsion, genocide, forced assimilation,

and disease were the main causes of this disappearance of whole peoples (Nash 1992, 280–86). Fears accompanying the resistance of Native American nations to the U.S. empire derived mainly from frontier violence. By contrast, important Indian nations would not be forcibly removed or decimated in the South until the middle part of the nineteenth century. It is possible that this fact, with its profound civilizational and racial uncertainty, helps give the South, in Tyler's novel, a more amorphous quality (described mostly as "southward" [Tyler 1797/2002, 74, 79]) than his New England.

Updike is the descendant of Captain John Underhill, who came to Massachusetts in 1630 and eventually accepted a leadership position in the Massachusetts militia during the Pequot War of 1637. After his role in the deadly encounter with the Pequot nation, Captain Underhill was chastised by the Massachusetts elites for "liberal" religious views and adultery and banished from the colony. Captain Underhill admitted to looking at a woman who had holes cut into her gloves to make using tobacco more convenient, but this charge appears to have been made to add weight to the more serious charge of heresy and sedition for criticizing the religious leaders of the colony. Updike Underhill spends several pages addressing the unfairness of these charges and the eventual punishment of his "honoured ancestor," and even reproduces a letter explaining his deeds written by Captain Underhill addressed to the Massachusetts court.

In fact, there is puzzling imbalance in this portion of the narrative. The incidents and Underhill's subsequent trial took place immediately after the Pequot War. The detailed description of Captain Underhill's adultery charges and his defense, alongside a slight reference to one of the most deadly conflicts with an important Indian nation involving delicate imperialist interests, is significant. According to historian Gary Nash, the Pequot nation was a thriving, numerous, and powerful people. Its economic strength and control of local trading routes helped it dominate several tribes in the region. By the 1620s, the Pequots aligned themselves with the Dutch. The rival Narragansett nation aligned with the British colonies in Massachusetts and Connecticut as both

sought to compete for the Pequot trade system and to drive the Dutch out of Massachusetts. Using the fabrication that members of the Pequot tribe had killed two English sailors, the Massachusetts militia invaded Pequot territory. Encountering heavy military resistance, the English forced a surrender by murdering hundreds of noncombatants in the massacre at Mystic River in 1637, a tactic deliberately designed to terrorize the Pequot nation into defeat. The atrocity even shocked the Narragansett allies of the English militia (Nash 1992, 82–84; Zinn 1995, 14–15).

This stunning imbalance in Tyler's narrative is a displacement of a major historical confrontation between the British Empire and a successful and populous Native American nation—the outcome of which was far from certain or preordained when it began—with the relatively minor details of a confrontation between a persecuted member of an overzealous Christian community. It was a discursive erasure, a part of the narrative construction of a vast and “savage wilderness” (Tyler 1797/2002, 19) tamed by well-meaning, if sometimes brutal, people. “Who ever reflect on the piety of our forefathers,” Updike, in his effort to recover the good name of Captain Underhill, not from the un-Christian act of mass murder, but from being erroneously accused of adultery and for speaking out against the injustice of the town elites, opines:

the noble unrestrained ardour, with that they resisted oppression in England, relinquished the delights of their native country, crossed a boisterous ocean, penetrated a savage wilderness, pestilence, Indian warfare, and transmitted to us their sentiments of independence, that love of liberty, that under God enabled us to obtain our own glorious freedom, will readily pass over those few dark spots of zeal, that clouded their rising sun. (19)

Thus, genocide is chalked up to mere overzealousness with less importance than an incident of wrongful accusation of and punishment for adultery. When this episode is read against Updike's ruminations on his return to the United States after his captivity in Algiers, a deeper erasure and absolution that extends beyond his personal experiences to the collective history of the whole nation occurs. His return from captivity to the bosom of his family and to

North America and its rights and privileges makes him feel “a rich compensation for all past miseries” (225). In the end, the business of enforcing the social harmony and getting on with building the republic are worthy enterprises; the horrid history of the European relation to American Indians and the atrocities committed against them were temporary but worthwhile sacrifices, Updike seems to be insisting.

Complete erasure, however, could not be accomplished. In recalling his mother’s vision at his birth that predicted his capture by Indians, Updike discoursed on the credibility of such visions citing the authority of no less a personage than the colonial Puritan intellectual and theologian Cotton Mather, whose historical work *Magnalia Christi Americana* details denominational disputes such as that which befell Captain Underhill, as well as the more infamous Salem witch trials and the destruction of the Pequot nation. On the latter, Mather described the war as a battle between God and the Devil and writes regarding the treaty ending the war: “in little more than *one* hour five or six hundred of these barbarians were dismissed from a world that was *burdened* by them” (quoted in Nash 1992, 84).

Updike’s appeal to Mather’s authority on the meaning and veracity of visions is ironic given that Mather’s history of New England was an important source of information for his own account of the period in that his ancestor lived. While this reference is Tyler’s device for developing Updike as a humorous and unfortunate character with an inflated sense of his own intellectual powers, it is also one that ties Tyler to a discourse on Native Americans as both present and absent savage characters occupying a wilderness requiring the Christianizing and civilizing influence of the European immigrants. In a scene at the Harvard museum, Updike laments the absence of artifacts from this Native past that he describes as “wretched, bauble specimens” unworthy of such an esteemed institution. These “specimens,” indiscernible by region or Indian nation, signify a dead people defeated by the superiority of the civilized community. Updike sees their presence as mere objects in an institution of civilized learning as essential to understanding the history of the imagined U.S. national community,

not the living history of Native Americans and their resistance to empire, and criticizes the small size of the collection (1797/2002, 61). Tyler is steeped in a discourse that ultimately concluded that Native American nations and peoples must be erased by violence or by assimilation and forgotten—hence, pages of details about adultery and heresy overwhelming short reference to Indian wars. Embedded within the psychology of this discourse, however, is that along with the brash claim of complete conquest, there is also a tremble of fear of violent resistance.

In his introduction to a collection of writing by American Indian activist William Apess, Barry O’Connell argues that “[t]o be remembered is to be valued.” The treaty signed by the surviving Pequots after the 1637 war included the provision that their nation would be forever dissolved and “forbade the use of their name forever.” According to O’Connell, “Memory of them was deliberately suppressed.” This was not simply a punishment for having lost a war; it was an “historical veiling, the deliberate forgetting in the dominant culture, of individuals and events that might encourage and legitimate a revival of defiance and rebellion at another time” (1992, xxiii–xxv).

Indeed not every Pequot could be exterminated physically; this memory could not be fully erased. A Pequot descendant, William Apess, born just a year after Tyler’s novel appeared in print and eighteen years before it was again widely republished, invokes the history of genocide, the hypocrisy of its perpetrators, and the memory of resistance:

[W]hites seem almost to forget the corroding sorrows of the poor Indians—the wrongs and calamities that were heaped upon them. Follow them into the deep recesses of their wilderness solitudes, hear their long and loud complaints, when driven by the pale faces whom they had kindly received, and cheerfully, in the fullness of their friendship, sustained through days and months of sorrow, and want, and affliction, from their happy homes, the resting place of their fathers. Can you wonder, friends, that they should have resisted, manfully, against the encroachment of their white neighbors? (1833/1992, 114)

A year following this speech, Apess lent his voice and pen to what came to be known as the Mashpee Revolt of 1834. Isolated on a reservation, the Mashpee Indians rejected both a Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling that they were “the unfortunate children of the public” and the imposition of religious and political leaders by whites (quoted in Nielsen 1985, 401). In public protests, resolutions, legal battles, and appeals to the state authorities, the Mashpee asserted their right to self-determination. When members of the tribe prevented two whites from stealing wood from the reservation, a common practice, local authorities described “the revolt” as violent and prepared for armed retaliation. (Incidentally, reports by local authorities reflect a fear of an interracial insurrection composed of Blacks and Indians.) In the end, the Mashpee won wide recognition for their cause, especially in the Boston liberal and abolitionist press, and won the right to choose their elected officials. For his part in the nonviolent uprising, Apess was arrested for instigating a riot, briefly imprisoned, and fined. Throughout his career as activist and a minister, Apess rejects the narrative of dissolution and forgetting offered by Mather and Tyler. Instead, Apess poses a challenge to the political and cultural hegemony of the dominant culture imposed through its discursive erasure of American Indians; it is a contest for voice, presence, and power.

Gesturing Africans and white ventriloquism

If erasure and displacement, both in memory and in fact, mark Tyler’s representation of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans in the new North American nation invoked another discourse of race and racism, one that was linked to the “Algerine” question. *The Algerine Captive* is an antislavery tract that followed a style of discourse used by opponents of slavery such as Benjamin Franklin, the diplomat David Humphreys, poet Joel Barlow, playwright David Everett, and many others; Barlow, Humphreys, and Franklin have parts in Tyler’s novel. In New England magazines, poets, fiction writers, satirists, polemicists, and others frequently linked their antislavery views to the Arab countries of North Africa (Isani 1979). Typically in this

genre, slavery in North America was contrasted with slavery in the Islamic world.

One such text was authored by Benjamin Franklin, titled “On the Slave Trade,” and appeared as a letter to the editor of the *Federal Gazette* in March 1790. In this letter, Franklin constructs what scholar Mukhtar Ali Isani describes as a “fictional African” in order to put forward Franklin’s own views on slavery. In this text, the views of proslavery advocates in Congress are compared to the opinions of the fictional Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a supposed member of the government in Algiers, who gave a speech defending the enslavement of Christians in 1687. In the Franklin-authored speech, Ibrahim responds to a petition by a dissident sect in Algiers calling for the end to piracy against European and North American shipping and the enslavement of prisoners captured in the process. “Who are to perform the common Labours of our City, and in our Families? Must we not then be our own slaves? (1790/1998, 758) Carefully paralleling the argument of North American slavery advocates, Franklin’s Ibrahim utters the lament that manumission would cost slaveholders valuable property and wealth, and forewarns that freedom will create a new class of outsiders unwilling to work and posing a threat to racial purity. Freed slaves, Ibrahim says, echoing eighteenth-century slavery advocates, will become beggars and thieves and will refuse to return to “their Countries.” If expelled from the country, they will be preyed upon by other countries in the area and will be unfit to care for or protect themselves. Also contrasted with the decidedly uncivilized Islamic Algeria are the hypocrisy and brutality of self-proclaimed Christians who profit from and politically support the North American system. But those who refuse conversion are treated with “Humanity” and live in the “Light” of civilized Islamic society. In fact, civilization, social order, and religious precepts all require the maintenance of the slave system, concludes Ibrahim (Franklin 1790/1998, 759–60).

Franklin’s imaginary discourse is meant as irony and does not reflect first-hand knowledge of the Islamic world. The capture and enslavement of Americans (and Europeans) in Algeria were political tactics to assert Algerian rights over control of

shipping in the Mediterranean rather than an economic system of property and labor as Franklin's character suggests (Allison 1995, 107). In terms of treatment and prospects for freedom, slavery in North America (and throughout European imperial possessions) compared unfavorably with that in Algeria. Like a host of other writers who use Islamic countries and Islam itself to highlight threats of tyranny, despotism, barbarism, and anarchy (35–39),⁴ Franklin makes a faulty comparison, implying that Islamic society in North Africa was uncivilized. Such a comparison with the proslavery advocates is not intended to elevate the Islamic world, but uses it as a foil to extirpate the worst elements of the West. In this manner, argues Isani, writers like Franklin and others created fictions in that “the black appears merely as a transparent persona intended not to serve as a believable character but as a means of broaching the subject of slavery” (1979, 356). North American opponents of slavery spoke in voices disguised as Africans and frequently opined on the inhumanity of slavery, delivering extensive descriptions of brutality and violence, as well as threats of slave insurrections (à la Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti in 1791). As Isani also notes, however, this massive amount of antislavery writing produced, in its own way, a rigidity of the racial boundaries between Black and white, identifying the former with slavery and negativity, and the latter with freedom and privilege. In no way were these characters imagined as contesting from within the imagined social harmony of a racially pure, Christian national culture.

This veritable tumult of ventriloquistic writing provided Royall Tyler with raw material for his own views about North American slavery in *The Algerine Captive*. But it was the work and experiences of an “authentic” African, Olaudah Equiano, who provided the content. Tyler initiates the novel's treatment of slavery in an unnamed Southern state,⁵ in a church where Updike Underhill observes a minister, after severely beating his slave for a minor infraction, proceeds to give a sermon on the Fourth Commandment. Ironically, of course, the Fourth Commandment requires adherents to keep the Sabbath as a holy day and to rest; it also requires that servants be given the day off. The minister keeps

his discourse to an efficient eleven minutes, and then hurries to the weekly horse races (Tyler 1797/2002, 80).

Sympathy for the condition of the enslaved, however, does not imply equality, shared humanity, or a welcome into the fold of civilization. For example, in his travels in the South, Updike fails to make a career in medicine and is forced to consider accepting a position as a schoolmaster, but under indentured conditions similar to a slave—"So that to purchase a school master and a negro was almost synonymous." In fact, Updike states that he would "have preferred labouring, with the slaves on their plantation, than sustaining the slavery and contempt of a school" (83).

While this assertion is intended to portend the great irony of Updike's eventual enslavement in Algeria, it also resonates with the predominant discourse of the time on racial identity and its relationship to liberty and slavery. As shown above, the privileges of citizenship and civilization were constituted both legally and culturally as white possessions. Tyler's imagined consumers of emergent national U.S. culture were white. The laws that governed slavery (in both the North and the South) defined the institution by race. Working-class discontent and rebellion were often couched in symbols and language in which exploitation and oppression were identified with Black people, and by contrast, freedom and rights with whites. Tyler invoked this discourse and complex of institutional practices in his popular 1787 play, *The Contrast*, in that Jonathan, a hired man, is "mistaken" for a servant. Jonathan replies angrily: "Servant! Sir, do you take me for a neger—I am Colonel Manly's waiter" (1787/1998, 1163). Tyler understands that discourses of independence and racial identity were closely linked in the minds of his audience, and deliberately fosters a linked national and racial identity predicated at least partially on social distance from Africans and slaves.⁵

Thus, when he writes a scenario that hints of a condition much like enslavement through being economically indebted to or tied to a community, such as the condition of schoolmaster offered to Updike, he is not saying that being a schoolmaster would require the same punishing labor or the same physical

brutality as that meted out to the slaves he “preferred labouring” among. He implies a racial difference between whites and Blacks that makes the lack of economic security seem as brutal for the white as violence and punishment is for the African. This particular contrast of race and condition of labor would reemerge in the pronouncements of white workers less than two decades later struggling with the contradictions of the racial makeup of the “agrarian republic” and the emergence of industrial capitalism and their incorporation into it as “wage slaves.” Capitalism had withdrawn the promise of independence and political power through landownership; now all they had was their racial identities as a source of collective political power (see Roediger 1991). First uttered by Jonathan, the mythical Yankee character of U.S. literature, and then repeated by Updike, his complicated descendent, this discourse of racial identity promotes social distance and difference between whites and Blacks, rather than asserting an essential humanity and equality. Questioning the humanity of some whites who profit from and advocate slavery is the limit of Tyler’s critique.

The contradiction between the “humanism” of opponents of slavery and their actions is highlighted when Updike bumbles his way into a position on board the slave ship *Freedom*. Offered economic security, the essential component of liberty, Updike accepts a position as surgeon on board this aptly named vessel heading to London before undertaking the trip to the African coast as part of the North American slave trade. After a brief stay in London, Updike boards the ship *Sympathy* with its cargo to be traded for African slaves.

It is at this point in the novel that Tyler adds a twist to the racial ventriloquism practiced by his contemporaries. From the moment Updike sees Africa, the narrative borrows heavily without citation from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* published in 1791. (One could argue that citing Olaudah Equiano’s work, of course, might have called into question the realism of the tale, but the manner in that Tyler readily cites European authorities for information about other matters in the novel suggests a refusal to accept Equiano as such an authority.)

From the descriptions of the “cleanliness” of Africans in their everyday habits, the “complexions” of the Portuguese slave traders to the medical inspections of the newly purchased slaves, the conditions in the hold of the ship, perceptions of the attitudes of the slaves to their condition, and the treatment handed out by the sailors, portions of Equiano’s narrative are lifted into Tyler’s novel (1797/2002, 94–101; Equiano 1995). But Equiano is silenced. Indeed, all of Tyler’s African slaves, other than inarticulate “frequent shrieks,” “tears,” or one who “gathered all of his strength, and, in one last effort, spoke with great emphasis and expired,” or have their “expressions” translated through “the linguist,” are little more than gesturing people (1797/2002, 98).

For example, before the ship sets sail to return to the West Indies, Updike convinces the captain that rather than beating recalcitrant slaves to death, he should bring the sickest ones to land in order to provide them medical assistance and restore them to health. (Ironic that “yankee humanity” helps preserve the profits of the slave-trading captain). The captain agrees, and within days the sick Africans are healing and, naturally, appreciate Updike’s help. Through “signs” they show their affection for Updike, they clap with joy, signify their desire to be free, make him “comprehend” their preferences for freedom, but they refuse to leave Updike. Tyler has created an image of gesturing fools who love their “humane” captor and naturally serve him. Who does not believe that victims of capture, presented with a chance to escape, would not retaliate against a man who aided in their capture and enslavement rather than stay and await the return of the slave ship? The image of the African that Tyler constructs is of the child-like figure less threatening than the rebellious Toussaint or even the African who talks back, such as Equiano. Equiano is a silent, invisible (but real) African presence that haunts Tyler, enabling him to come to a moment of self-discovery and identity, as novelist Toni Morrison proposed would become a recurrent theme in American literature authored by whites (1990). Tyler’s images are designed to render the African harmless, but not an equal deserving the privileges of citizenship or humanity, and certainly not as participant in a

hybrid, highly contested North American culture. The textual evidence requires acceptance of Isani's assertion that Tyler's Africans, like those of many of his contemporaries, are silent figures used to present political views rather than being imaginatively constructed humans.

Tyler's caricatures are created as a racist gesture meant to degrade the cultural work of his contemporaries—poet Phillis Wheatley, scientist Benjamin Banneker, or AME Church founders Absalom Jones and Richard Allen—and to silence the calls for freedom and equality by antislavery and equality activists such as Equiano, Lemuel Haynes, and Prince Hall. In her poem "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth," penned in 1772 to a British official overseeing the North American colonies, Wheatley notes that her reasons for opposing tyranny come from actual personal and community experience of enslavement and race prejudice. "I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate/Was snatch'd from *Afric's* fancy shore. . . . Such, such my case. And can I then but pray/Others may never feel tyrannic sway?" (1770/2001, 40) Wheatley's own voice and experience starkly contrasts with the gesturing imposters invented by Tyler, or the ventriloquist dolls of Franklin and others.

Most importantly, Tyler's representations provided an alternative version of "the African" to the image conjured by the shocking overthrow of French imperial rule of Haiti, an event seared into the mind of the slave-trading nation. W. E. B. Du Bois notes, in his study of the slave trade, that the revolution led by Toussaint L'Ouverture in 1791 "contrived a Negro 'problem' for the Western Hemisphere, intensified and defined the anti-slavery movement." It was the Haitian rebellion that "rendered more certain the final prohibition of the slave-trade by the United States in 1807" (Du Bois 1986, 74). Slave rebellions, rumored or factual, swept through the United States from North Carolina and Virginia to New York and New Jersey. Conspiracies of armed revolt, violence, arson, destruction of property, runaways, suspicious gatherings of Blacks haunted the minds of Americans, North and South (Aptheker 1993, 209–15). Resistance, rather than the moral appeals of Tyler and others, proved to be the force that ended slavery; resistance, more than the racially mitigated

“humanism” Tyler expresses, proved the humanity and equality of Africans.

Conclusion: Empire, women, and veils

In one of three commentaries on the treatment of Islamic women, claimed to result from his own experience or from “authentic information,” Updike describes the women of Algiers as “enjoy[ing] greater liberty than is generally conceived.” In fact, it is conjectured that “the women take great liberties in this general disguise,” referring of course to wearing veils from head to toe (Tyler 1797/2002, 175). This language invokes the image of contrast to the West by implying that popular Western perceptions of the total subjugation of Islamic women are exaggerated, and that Islamic women use their confines to engage in secret, subversive activities. Tyler’s remark suggests that concern for the fate of Islamic women weighed on the minds of enlightened Westerners at least to some small extent. At the same time, this imaginary projection of the Oriental woman encased in a body-length veil performing subversive acts underneath hints of a deviant sexuality. In his other encounters with Islamic women, Updike describes them as perpetually hidden behind veils, in the homes, and in segregated sections of the home (121–22; 151–53; 174–75).

It is amazing how U.S. views of the Islamic and Arab worlds can remain so constant and consistent, despite the pretense at only occasional interest and the habit of convenient amnesia. After criticism of the U.S. bombing and invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the subsequent extended occupation, despite what was then believed to be the defeat of the repressive Taliban regime, pressed the Bush administration for broader justifications for the ongoing conflict, Laura Bush was brought forward to rejuvenate that ancient concern for Islamic women. She praised the efforts of the invading forces for saving the women of Afghanistan:

The plight of women and children in Afghanistan is a matter of deliberate human cruelty, carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control. . . .

. . . Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror—not only because our hearts break for the women and children in Afghanistan, but also because in Afghanistan we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us.

. . . Because of our recent military gains in much of Afghanistan, women are no longer imprisoned in their homes. They can listen to music and teach their daughters without fear of punishment. (2001)

The liberation of veiled women thus became the reason for an imperial adventure in Afghanistan. But the images presented are not those of human equals, but of silent passive victims awaiting the power of the U.S. military for liberation. They displace and erase the history of the struggles of democratic forces, including feminists, in Afghanistan, suppressed by religious fundamentalists. In the 1980s, the U.S. empire sided with the fundamentalists against the influence of Communism by imprisoning, deporting, and murdering those women who dared prematurely to demand equality. Now that those repressive forces of terror pose a threat to civilization, the United States can turn its benevolent interests to the abused and tortured women of Afghanistan, and continue to ignore the democratic struggle in Afghanistan.

This “illusion of benevolence,” to borrow again from Said (1986, xvii), is an attempt to provide cover for the naked power of U.S. imperialism. Just as the veiled woman was a symbol of tyranny and barbarity that could only be overcome by the strength through unity that resonated with Tyler’s 1797 audience, she had become of image of U.S. military power and civilization in 2001. Indeed, the irony of the closing lines of Tyler’s novel as the slogan that in modified form propels the Bush “war on terror”—BY UNITING WE STAND, BY DIVIDING WE FALL” (226)—only underlines the ties of the present to past. As it was then, Tyler’s slogan remains a call for empire veiled as a crusade.

Grand Rapids, Michigan

NOTES

1. Tyler's narrative includes a visit to Benjamin Franklin, and Updike notes the elder statesman's rise from the lowly stature of "Poor Richard," making this bootstraps myth more explicit.

2. In another piece written under a pseudonym, Tyler described "Syriac" and "Arabic" as "dead languages" (Davidson 1985, 197).

3. Jonathan, interestingly, is a character that Tyler's twentieth-century critics have described as one of the "central myth figures" of U.S. national culture (Stein 1965, 455). Leo Marx says Jonathan in Tyler's play *The Contrast* "took hold of the popular imagination" for his "intriguing blend of astuteness and rural simplicity" (1964, 132–33). Updike Underhill should be read as a version of this figure with more character depth and as being represented as "universal."

4. Historian Robert J. Allison notes that, during the Revolutionary War, agitators used Islamic countries to show the results of tyranny and despotism. After the war, conservative Federalists used Islamic countries to point out how anarchy resulted from a weak central government. Anti-Federalists tended to use the image of the Islamic world to show the continued threat of despotism posed by Federalist ideas.

5. By the time of publication of *The Algerine Captive*, most Northern states had abolished the slave trade, but census figures indicate that the number of enslaved people in New England stood in the thousands (Du Bois 1986).

6. Historian Gordon S. Wood notes this particular conversation and Jonathan's rebellion at being considered a servant. Wood correctly links it to working-class distaste for being considered lowly, and identifies this sense of self-respect with the revolution's discourse of independence and liberty. Wood fails glaringly, however, to tie it to the racial dimension explicit in Tyler's dialogue (1991, 184).

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The Socialist Market Economy and Other Theoretical Issues—NST Symposium June 2007. Part II

In the last issue of *Nature, Society, and Thought*, we began publication of the papers presented at the conference “Socialist Market Economy and Other Theoretical Issues” cosponsored by *Nature, Society, and Thought*, the Academy of Marxism of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the Central Translation and Compilation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Beijing, 2–3 June 2007.

In this section of the journal, we continue the publication of the conference papers.

As we go to press in September 2008 with this issue of the journal, a year has passed since the June 2007 conference. This is an opportune time to look at developments in China regarding some of the questions raised in the conference papers about China’s socialist market economy. Three critical issues stand out. Cheng Enfu, President of the Academy of Marxism, expressed concern in his paper about weakening of the the public sector relative to the private sector in the Chinese economy, since the concept of the socialist market economy is based on dominance of the public sector. (*Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol. 20, no. 1, 44–45). He indicated that the nonpublic sector had surpassed 50 percent. He also indicated concern about the polarization of income, the latter being the subject of Yang Shenming’s paper in this issue. No discernible improvement has taken place in these two areas since the June 2007 conference.

Cheng Enfu also expressed concern about the weight of the export sector of the economy (characterized by low-skilled labor). A change can be observed here. An article in the *New York Times* on

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1 August 2008 reported, “No longer content to be the home of low-skilled, low-cost, low-margin manufacturing for toys, pens, clothes and other goods, Chinese companies are trying to move up the value chain. . . . The government is backing the drive, . . . using incentives to encourage companies to innovate, but also moving to discourage low-end manufacturers from operating in southern China. . . . [B]y introducing tougher labor and environmental standards and ending tax breaks for thousands of factories here, the government has sent a powerful signal about its global ambitions, and helped encourage an exodus of factories from an area long considered the world’s shop floor.” Apart from enhancing China’s competitiveness in hi-tech exports, the net effect of reduction in investments for low-skilled labor will be to weaken the volume of production for the export market relative to the domestic market.

The achievement of the goal of societal *harmoniousness*, discussed in several papers, depends primarily on the establishment of worker-employer relations free of confrontational struggle. This is not possible without a participatory trade-union movement effectively representing the working class—largely absent at the time of the June 2007 conference, although some progress was being made, as pointed out in Eddie Eitches’s paper in this issue. An article in the Hong Kong-based *China Labour Bulletin* on 21 August 2008 entitled “A Turning Point for China’s Trade Unions” began: “We may have reached a crucial turning point in the history of China’s trade union movement. For the first time since 1949, trade union officials are openly stating that the union should represent the workers and no one else, while new legislation in Shenzhen places collective bargaining—previously a no-go area—at the core of the union’s work. ‘The trade union is a matter for the workers themselves,’ Chen Weiguang, chairman of the Guangzhou Federation of Trade Unions told a conference on 15 July 2008, adding that the role of enterprise unions must change from ‘persuading the boss’ to ‘mobilizing the workers’” (<http://www.clb.org.hk/en>). If this policy is implemented throughout China, it bodes well for achieving a harmonious socialist market economy.

Erwin Marquit

Federal Unions in the United States as Agents of Social Change: Comparisons with China

Eddie Eitches

I am not an academician but a worker. Nevertheless, I graduated from Harvard Law School, where I served as the Executive Editor of the *Harvard Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Law Review* and was a leader in the struggle to force Harvard to divest its investments in South Africa. While there was much pressure to join one of the capitalist law firms upon graduation, I never chose that path. My grandfather was a cloth cutter and union member in New York. He was active in the Socialist Party. My father was a government worker and believed strongly that the socially committed should work for the government. I followed my father's advice and have worked for the government for my entire career.

I am the President of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 476, AFL-CIO at the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD is a critical agency in the pursuit of housing for everyone and the development of our country's cities. I came to HUD in 1978 because I wanted to pursue those interests. At that time, HUD was controlled by the Democrats and made strong efforts to address inequality in the United States. I was elected union president in 1999. I ran because I believed that the previous union leadership

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was simply an arm of management and ignored serious worker concerns. As union president, I have furthered HUD's goals despite a hostile Bush administration.

In some ways, our union works in a way that is very similar to the way the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) operates in China. Federal workers are not allowed to strike and we are limited in what conditions are subject to collective bargaining. For example, we cannot bargain directly over wages. We also favor partnership with management. This is similar to the ACFTU's interest in finding "harmony" with management. Like the ACFTU, we must emphasize efficiency in the workforce although we are increasingly talking about equity.

Our unions, like those of our Chinese counterparts, serve a social function. We hold major parties at holidays. We also visit and provide assistance to the sick, including donated sick leave time. We provide interest-free payday loans.

But we go beyond Chinese unions in pressing for affirmative benefits. For example, we pressed management to agree to a student loan repayment subsidy program: the more you owed, the less you made, the more you received. If your debts were large and you made little money, the government would pay the debt pursuant to the formula. We also worked to establish a daycare subsidy program: again, the less you made, the more your dependants, the great subsidy you received. At the lowest salary end with many dependents, your daycare was almost free.

Unlike unions in China, we are independent of the government. We can lobby our Congress on all subjects, including wages. I did not join a party and then switch from manager to union leader; instead I served as a worker and then was elected union president. In fact, as a government worker, I am prohibited from playing an active role in any political party. John Gage, the head of AFGE, has no official governmental role; on the other hand, Wei Jianxing, the President of the ACFTU, is a member of the Politburo. In the United States we have never had a prominent union leader serving in our cabinet.

I have always stressed that the union's mission is to further the goals both of HUD and the workers. Thus, we have pressed

Congress to keep and enhance Community Development Block Grant programs despite the Bush administration's interest in terminating them. We have stressed that programs that increase home ownership should be supported but that we must also enhance programs for renters, who are often in much greater need of assistance. Congress listens to us as an independent voice. Of course, when the party that is more focused on social concerns, the Democrats, is in power, we do better. But most of those political managers working at HUD—now Republicans—privately hope that we prevail in maintaining and building a strong HUD. Chinese unions do not play this confrontational role; they apparently rally the workers to support the government's decision even if the government's choice will not serve the people's welfare.

We attempt to bargain collectively over the way in which management is structured. For example, HUD has taken over public-housing authorities, which provide housing for the poorest residents, when they are bankrupt. HUD wanted to politicize the division that would run this sensitive operation. It had already placed loyal (Republican) party members in key positions and wanted to politicize the operation with party members. We protested. Management said that we could not bargain over the structure of the operation. We used our Congress, however, which still must approve appropriations for HUD, to stop this process. The entity will not be politicized, and the very poor who are the clients (lumpenproletariat) will be better served. Our Chinese counterparts do not present management with ways to improve performance but instead are tied to management and implement management decisions.

We consistently fight efforts to contract out (privatize) our work. The Bush administration wants us to compete with entities that do not really care about HUD's goals (such as providing low-income housing) and do not pay adequate benefits (such as health care) but have bid for services HUD provides at lower rates than what the government pays HUD employees. While the Bush administration is not supposed to contract out work that is "inherently governmental," it consistently makes such attempts, which we must contest. We have won the competitions for our work at

HUD because the union has played an active role. Chinese unions have not protested the privatization of government operations.

In 1925, the ACFTU was formed in response to British colonial shootings and the Canton-Hong Kong general strike. Leaders of the Communist Party of China (CPC), including Mao, helped establish unions that became the base of the CPC. At that time and until 1949, Chinese unions, like their American counterparts, were quite robust and played an active role in the economy.

With the adoption of the Soviet economic model in 1949, the unions lost their independence. The government set wages, hours, and working conditions, including retirement, housing, and medical care. The *danwei*, the work unit, played a much more important role than the union. Union leaders came from the CPC or management and were assigned to the ACFTU. The ACFTU conveyed government policies to workers and promoted labor discipline.

Today, many workers employed in the private sector have criticized the ACFTU because the ACFTU still generally plays a passive role in employer/employee relations. "Local authorities sacrifice workers for investors," said Mr. Liu, a migrant who has worked at the Neil Pryde factory for seven years. "They do not respect or enforce the laws." My parent union, the AFL-CIO, stated in a filing with the U.S. Trade Representative, "Where the ACFTU is present, its role is to discipline the workforce on behalf of [Communist Party] policies, local development strategies, and investor goals, not to assert worker interests and rights."

But as inequality is becoming more the rule, the ACFTU is realizing that the ACFTU must be a more vocal advocate of the proletariat, especially in regard to the foreign-owned companies. Today foreign and domestic employers independently determine wages, hours, as well as working and living conditions. Exploitation is the norm, especially of those peasants who migrate to the cities. They end up working incredibly long hours, living in horrid accommodations, and earning little more than what the factory charges them for room and board. Uniformity and continuity under the older, purer Marxist model have vanished. The inequities are most visible in the belt of cities located on the southeastern shore. Although strikes are still illegal, the Guangdong Union

Association, a government-affiliated group, said there were more than 10,000 strikes in the province last year.

There are far fewer legal obstacles to organizing workers in China than in the United States. According to Chinese law, with 25 employees agreeing, companies must allow the union to form. In the United States, companies legally place all types of hurdles in the way of those workers who are trying to organize. Even when more than 50 percent of the workforce has signed cards stating that they want a union, companies can initially refuse, demanding a secret election. During the campaign season, the companies then hold meetings with workers, arguing that a union will destroy the company and force it to fire workers.

The American union movement is well aware of ACFTU's interaction with Wal-Mart. Wang Ying, the ACFTU division chief in charge of organizing foreign companies, complained that initially Wal-Mart warned workers not to talk to union officials during work hours. This is the Wal-Mart that we know, which closed down its only American operation in which the employees were brave enough to vote for the union. But I believe that the element of the ACFTU promoting change will not allow Wal-Mart to sap the work out of Chinese employees and transfer the money to Arkansas; instead a revitalized ACFTU will ultimately demand higher wages and benefits. Because Wal-Mart needs the relatively cheap work force in China to continue to supply its markets, Wal-Mart will reluctantly acquiesce. Wal-Mart cannot profit without China. The ACFTU must exploit the situation for the benefit of the workers. In the interest of solidarity, the ACFTU could pressure Wal-Mart to allow card check for choosing a union in its stores in the United States.

China needs real partnership in driving its government institutions and furthering the cause of the workers. Clearly, Chinese government workers do not face the same kind of mistreatment as the foreign companies mete out to their employees. Still, a revitalized ACFTU should apply the lessons learned in dealing with the private entities to government departments and state-owned enterprises. Many government workers who protest corruption may need protection from a union type of entity. Layoffs caused by

incompetent managers should start with firing the managers, not the workers. The unions could protect work from being handed to the private sector, which does not really care about the goals of equity that the Party espouses, and play a role in choosing which work should not be trusted to the private sector, which is focused on profits and not service. If we unleash the ACFTU to do the same with its government members as it does with the Wal-Marts, it might find incredible, positive results. Then, no one will argue that China needs independent unions to protect the proletariat.

Washington, DC

Basic Concepts of the Harmonious Socialist Society

Deng Chenming

Theoretical origin of the harmonious socialist society

In Chinese traditional culture, there are various meanings of *he xie* (harmony). *He* is widely used to describe the state of a government that acts fairly internally and the consonant relationship between superiors and subordinates of a family or a country; *xie* has the meaning of coordination and harmony. Confucius proposed “Harmony but not sameness,” Mencius put forward the view, “opportunities vouchsafed by heaven are less important than terrestrial advantages, which, in turn, are less important than unity among people.” According to Xunzi, “Unity makes the one, then makes stronger.” There are various ideas of harmonious society in Chinese traditional culture, among which the most typical are “the well-off society” and “the great harmony society.”

The idea of harmony in the West also has a long history. The ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras was the first to put *harmony* into a philosophical category. Heraclitus, in asserting the value of harmony, spoke of the “harmony of opposites.” In Socrates’ time, *harmony* was introduced among political and social categories. Plato maintained that “justice is harmony.” The utopian socialists Saint-Simon and Fourier called the ideal

systems they designed harmonious systems. Using dialectical and historical materialism and the theory of surplus value as theoretical weapons, Marx and Engels transformed socialism from utopian to scientific. And they brought forth the assumption of a future harmonious society. The realization of a harmonious society is, first of all, the inexorable trend of the development of human history; second, the high development of the productive forces is the precondition for the realization of a harmonious society; third, the future harmonious society will show the interconnection between productive forces and production relations and between the economic foundation of society and the superstructure; and it will solve its contradictions through self-adjustment; and fourth, the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

Comrade Mao Zedong, on the basis of his summary of the experience and lessons of China's socialist construction, considered that although there are many contradictions in socialist society, they could be solved by the improvement of the social system itself. Comrade Deng Xiaoping proposed a series of thoughts about the integrated coordinated development of society. Comrade Jiang Zemin stressed the coordinated development of "three civilizations." And Comrade Hu Jintao put forward the aim of building a harmonious socialist society.

Socialist society, whether considered from the basic principles of scientific socialism or Chinese traditional culture, is a harmonious society with the coordinated development of economy, politics, civilization, and society and the common progress of political, material, and spiritual civilization. The great strategic mission—building a harmonious socialist society—raised at the Fourth Plenum of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) is the distillation of the ministerial ideas of the Communist Party of China. It is also the deepening of the understanding of the principle of the administration of CPC, of socialist construction, and the development of human society. It embodies the demands of its socialist nature, the requirement of the time, and the practice and development of modern China.

Characteristics of the harmonious socialist society

Harmonious socialist society has a rich connotation. Comrade Hu Jintao said that the harmonious socialist society we intend to build is a democratic society under the rule of law, a society based on equity and justice, an honest and caring society, a society full of vigor, a society in which humans live in harmony with nature, and a stable and orderly society.

1. The harmonious socialist society is a society full of developing vigor. Social vigor contains three aspects: the first is the vigor of the main social body, expressed by the full play of human activity, enthusiasm, and creativity; the second is vigor as the direct ingredient and resource of social production and life, such as the rational use of nature's resources, improvement of the environment, the form and creation of new knowledge and culture; the third is vigor of social production, the way and style of life. It can realize the self-continuation, self-improvement, and self-renewal of the social system and turn its function into performance.

The vigor of socialist society is reflected in the economy, politics, culture, human development, and other aspects of society. The main embodiment of economic vigor is the further deepening of reform and widening opening-up, toppling all ideas and systems that obstruct development, arousing the creativity of the broad masses of people, and promoting the constant increase of social material wealth. Political vigor means making full play of socialist democracy, guiding and developing activity of citizens and their enthusiastic participation in political affairs, enjoyment of the widest rights and freedom. Cultural vigor means cultivating the citizen's scientific and cultural quality and ideological and moral quality, developing advanced culture with great strength, making full play of culture's function of guiding and educating people, building a social atmosphere of health, harmony, and cultural progress, and offering ideological assurance, spiritual energy, and intellectual support to the economic development of society. The vigor of development of the harmonious socialist society is focused on the full play and the practical guarantee of the activity, enthusiasm, and creativity of the members of society.

The premise of building a harmonious socialist society is to insist on bringing all active elements into play extensively and fully. The aim of building a harmonious socialist society requires us to create a social atmosphere that encourages and supports people to engage in economic activity, and to let the vigor of all labor, knowledge, technology, management, and capital break forth, and allow all sources of social wealth to work to the benefit of the people.

2. The harmonious socialist society is a society promoting equity and justice. China's reform and development has entered a crucial period. In the process of changing the economic system to the development of a market economy and changing the social structure to a pluralism of interests, the problem of social equity becomes more prominent day by day.

Today, the relatively prominent equity problem in China's economic social life is: (1) the widening gap of income among members of society; (2) some complicated internal conflicts of interest among the people. In the process of developing a socialist market economy, we should put development on top and break through the old system of equity. Hence the appearance of income differentials among regions and social classes is inevitable. We must pay attention, however, to social equity. The income and distribution differential should not be too large. We should control it in a rational way that is acceptable to the people, and especially eliminate unreasonable, as well as illegal, factors that could give rise to unfair distributions of income. On one hand, we should continue to encourage people to follow the path of acquisition by their industry under the law; on the other hand, we should resolutely take measures against those who want to become rich by any kind of illegal and dishonest method.

3. The harmonious socialist society must be an orderly society. Social order means that all sides of social life, such as economics, politics, ideology, culture, have regulations by which to abide. Order on political side involves the administration of power—and its acceptance by the people—that meets the requirements of democratic procedure with a complete and effective system of supervision of authority. The

economic side is orderly insofar as the functions of enterprises, market, and government are oriented correctly, and follow the law and market principles. The main embodiment of ideological and cultural order is the correct treatment and guidance of the relationship between ideological centralization and the diversity of ideological and cultural development, the formation of an ideological basis as a national goal. The order of social life is mainly displayed in the insistence that there be a common socialist ethic, and that individual freedom accepts the ethics as a premise. Order is the basic factor of socialist democracy. Democracy needs a definite form in order to be realized. Socialist democracy is a new form, one that represents the broadest will of the masses. The Communist Party of China always pays great attention to the reform of the political system, putting it forward actively and steadily. The basic principle of the reform of China's political system is to combine organically the assertion of the leading role of the Communist Party of China with the people being the master of the nation, and ruling the country under the law, adapting to the demands of building the socialist market economic system, perfecting it, and at the same time offering the guarantee of law and regulation for the development of socialist democracy. The order is also represented by the fair distribution of the social product and the effort to offer each person appropriate positions and work on the basis individual achievement.

4. The harmonious socialist society is a stable society. Social stability means social peace and stability, including harmonious relations among people and the individual psychological gentleness. The harmonious society should be a society in which harmonious relations exist among individuals, groups, and social classes, and between individuals and society, for their mutual benefit and equality, but not sameness. Equality means that people should be treated as equals in human dignity, rights, opportunities, regulation, and other aspects. The harmonious socialist society should be a society that respects the independent character of members of society, guarantees basic rights and benefits, ensures everyone equal opportunity, and brings abilities into full play according

to the same principles. We should have a clear understanding that the difference between diversity and individuality exists objectively. Attempts to achieve social harmony and unity by excluding diversity and individuality could only make the society a pool of stagnant water. Harmony but not sameness is respecting the individual, allowing for the differences in individuality, and through consultation, arriving at the coordination, cooperation, and win-win of diversity. The value of harmony in modern times is that it is the unity of diversity and difference. The premise of harmony but not sameness is to acknowledge and respect individual differences, that is, to acknowledge diversity. The harmonious socialist society should be a society that respects diversity and individual differences and seeks unity and mutual benefit. Mutual benefit is a kind of relationship among every social class, group, and individual. This relationship means that when some classes or groups endeavor to increase their benefits, they will not sacrifice or damage the benefits of other classes or groups. Only in this way can we establish the harmony and unity of members of society and guarantee the stable functioning of society.

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The New Scramble for Africa

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Over the last decade, Africa has drawn increasing attention from American, Asian, and European powers. This comes fifty years after independence, one century after European imperialism, and five centuries after initial coastal encounters. Are we on the brink of a new global relationship, or is this just another scramble for Africa?

Imperialism

Between 1876 and 1914, a handful of states gained dominion over one-quarter of the globe's land surface. This process of colonization was especially marked in Africa. I still recall a schoolboy fact: in 1870, one-tenth of Africa's land surface was colonized, yet by 1900 only one-tenth (Ethiopia, Liberia, part of Morocco) was not colonized. The key moment for this carve-up was the 1884–85 Berlin Conference, which legally recognized existing European possessions and required further claims to be stronger than mere informal predominance in a region. The Europeans, led by the Portuguese during the 1440s, had been involved in African affairs for over four centuries, but their influence was mainly restricted to the coastal regions. In less than thirty years, they had seized control of virtually an entire continent. No wonder historians refer to this process as the scramble for Africa (Hobsbawn 1989, 57–9; Iliffe 1995, 187–91).

This race for Africa has fueled a great deal of debate. One early explanation held that European powers needed new colonies

for trade and investment. Actually, most capital investment and trade went to older colonies. More persuasive is the argument that Western industrial economies required new sources of raw materials. Rubber from the Congo and Liberia, as well as copper from Zaire and Zambia, met the demands of the new electrical and motor industries. Gold, diamonds, magnesium, and uranium were pulled out of the South African earth by cheap African labor to support superprofitable mining and diamond companies as well as to underwrite financial systems (Rodney 1982, 152–54). Moreover, new metropolitan tastes in mass consumption demanded cocoa, coffee, chocolate, soap, and vegetable oils from Africa. This was only the latest stage of older colonial economies in which African slaves organized on New World plantations had cultivated sugar, tobacco, cotton, and indigo for Old World consumers.

The other reason for the scramble was strategic. The British sought control of eastern and southern Africa to protect India, the jewel in their imperial crown; while other states saw colonies as either a path to greatness (the newly unified Germany in 1871 and Italy in 1870), or as a means to prevent further expansion by other powers (France). It should be added that new technological developments, especially quinine prophylaxis to lower European death rates and the Maxim machine gun as a more efficient killing machine, explain how Europeans were able to implement African partition so successfully (Hobsbawn 1989, 63–66; Ilife 1995, 192–93).

This colonization had several important economic consequences. On the demand side, it built up Western industrial economies, created massive monetary profits, and enhanced technological skills in the metropolitan sectors. It also provided mass consumer goods and racial notions of superiority at precisely the moment the European masses were entering the electoral arena for the first time. On the supply side, it created an impoverished African wage-earning class on the plantations and in the mines as well as mono-economies of specialized production that limited the expansion and further development of colonized economies. One of the most persuasive arguments of underdevelopment theorists is that centuries of slave trading, colonialism, and

mono-production historically explain the technologically backward nature of African economies (Rodney 1982).

Cold War and decolonization

Ironically, decolonization proved even quicker than colonization. Much of the reason had to do with the economic exhaustion of colonial powers in defeating fascism. The process of decolonization of African and Asian nations from European control occurred from the late 1940s in Asia through the early 1970s in southern Africa. At the same time, the Cold War represented a “constant confrontation” between two camps from the dissolution of the wartime alliance in 1945 through to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989–91 (Hobsbawm 1994, 226). These four plus decades represented an economic conflict between the free market and planned economies, as well as an ideological struggle between capitalism and Communism. These regions became important zones of conflict—for instance, two of the three hot wars were in Korea and Vietnam (the other being Afghanistan)—and numerous proxy wars in Africa. They also became zones for ideological struggle, especially concerning political and economic developments. While some looked toward Western models of free markets and liberal democracy, many newly liberated nations were attracted toward planned economies and single-party control (Calvocoressi 1982, 65). Moreover, these new sovereign nations committed themselves to a program of socialist modernization along with a neutral nonaligned foreign policy to steer clear of the rocky paths of the Cold War world.

Relations between the People’s Republic of China and African decolonizing nations highlight the links between the Cold War and decolonization. Despite past coastal encounters, Sino-African relations came of age during the mid-1950s with the establishment of diplomatic ties between Egypt and China, and the Bandung Conference of twenty-nine Asian and African nations in April 1955 (Iliffe 1995, 55). The important point about Bandung was that it “was an assembly of the needy and the indignant, not a concentration of power” (Calvocoressi 1982, 100; Mishra 2006). China supported African liberation

movements during the 1950s and 1960s. It also built railroads for newly independent nations, the showcase being the Tanzam railroad, a single-land track of 2,000 kilometers with ninety-one double-line stations transporting goods between Tanzania and Zambia (Rodney 1982, 108; Calvocoressi 1982, 440). African students were educated in China, while Chinese doctors tended the sick in African nations.

The reasons for this mutual interest were clear. The Chinese were demonstrating solidarity against the West, outdoing the Soviet Union because of the Sino-Soviet split during the late 1950s over foreign relations with the United States (Calvocoressi 1982, 63–69). They also sought global influence outside of the United Nations prior to China joining in 1970 and inside afterwards (*Economist* 2006). For Africans, China supported national-liberation struggles, provided much-needed material and medicinal support, and promised an alternative model of development from Western capitalist democracies historically associated with slavery and colonialism.

There are three critical points regarding the Cold War and African decolonization. First, American and Chinese interest in Africa had a limited economic and political impact on the continent. Despite China's establishment of diplomatic ties with Egypt, Sudan, Ghana, and Guinea during the 1950s, Chinese credits were small: \$26 million for Guinea, and \$19.5 million for Ghana and Mali, respectively. By the end of the 1970s, trade only totaled about \$400 million per year (Calvocoressi 1982, 439). The exception was China and Tanzania and the construction of Tanzam. Second, economic ties with the old colonial rulers continued to predominate. For example, in 1995 about forty-five percent of sub-Saharan Africa's trade was with the European Union (*Economist* 2006). The shift toward new trading partners over the last decade is perhaps the most striking indication of Africa's new place in the global economy. Third, a major buildup of military aid to Africa was a consequence of proxy wars fought between the West and East.

Although the Cold War is over fifteen years dead, it will take decades before the bloody consequences of arming Africa works

itself out. As I write, its latest expression can be found with the armed militias on the Horn of Africa.

New scramble

A new scramble for Africa began in the 1990s, taking numerous forms. The world's wealthiest nations have been rapidly moving toward the cancellation of debt owed by the world's poorest nations. The accord was finally reached at a ministers' meeting of the G8 (the rich gentlemen's club) in London in early June 2005, where it was agreed to cancel up to \$55 billion worth of debt for eighteen countries, fourteen of which are in sub-Saharan Africa (CNN.com 2005). The major reason for this accord was the economic reality that these poor nations can neither deal with their existing problems—poverty, lack of health care, HIV-aids, etc.—nor can they realistically pursue socioeconomic development with this huge rock of indebtedness crushing them. It is also likely that the coming of the millenium persuaded some politicians as well as global activists that this was a propitious moment to “forgive” past debts and start anew. At the same time, some of these sanctimonious debt-cancellation proponents sound as if their nations lent massive amounts of money on unfair terms in order to have the satisfaction of abolishing it.

The American state's limited interest in Africa is in stark contrast to its actions since the 1990s, and after the bomb attacks on American territory in 2001. The two major imperatives for the recent U.S. scramble for Africa concern energy supplies and national security. West Africa has sixty billion barrels of proven oil reserves. Nigeria supplies the United States with ten percent of its oil imports; while Angola provides four percent. Oil experts estimate that the Gulf of Guinea will provide the United States with twenty-five percent of its oil imports by 2015. The strategic concerns involve the protection of oil routes and prevention of the spread of radical Islam. The major U.S. military base in Africa established in 2002 in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, currently houses 1,500 military personnel, and serves to safeguard the passage of vital oil supplies from the Mideast (Foster 2006, 6–10).

This increased U.S. presence is also designed to prevent the radicalization of African Muslim societies. I have no reason to doubt that part of the reason for the recent airstrikes on Somalia was to destroy Islamic militants associated with the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya during the late 1990s (Reynolds 2007). But we cannot ignore the geostrategic importance of this region; the Horn to the Americans is becoming what Suez was to the British in the first scramble.

The establishment of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 represents a major consolidation of the Sino-Africa partnership fostered during the mid-1950s. Its third meeting was held in Beijing in early November 2006, and was attended by forty-eight African leaders and numerous Chinese officials who signed trade deals worth \$1.9 billion. The next meeting is to be held in Cairo in 2010, by which time it is expected that trade between Egypt and China will increase to \$7 billion, making China, rather than the United States, Egypt’s largest trading partner. It is also expected that China will have doubled its aid to Africa, with trade between the two escalating to \$100 billion (Ezzat 2006; *Egyptian Gazette* 2006a, 2006b). The attraction of this type of partnership for African nations is not only the failure of neoliberal reforms and the need for alternative development strategies, but also the avoidance of the supracontrol exerted by world financial institutions, often manipulated by former colonial powers. In exchange, Africa offers China vital raw materials for its booming industrial economy and the prospect of markets for cheap goods from the homeland (*Economist* 2006).

What are the theoretical implications of this new scramble for Africa? The rush to seize raw materials to meet voracious energy and industrial needs by the Americans and the Chinese suggests a certain lack of novelty in the historical process. Africa still seems to serve as Marx’s “warren” for hunting human and natural resources. Furthermore, if China is emerging as a leading exporter of cheap goods, what are the implications of the flood of such goods on local home markets in poor African societies? Are African goods penetrating Chinese markets as easily? Let us not find—to paraphrase Marx’s comment about bourgeois

goods—that the “cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls” (Marx and Engels 1975, 488).

Moreover, the new Sino-African relationship looks promising, but how does it tackle the mutual problem of corruption? The Chinese economist Hu Angang estimates that during the late 1990s, the cumulative annual cost of corruption was between thirteen and sixteen percent of GDP (Hutton 2007, 2). The problem of political and economic corruption is familiar in African societies. What guarantee, therefore, is there that African and Chinese elites will not squander the benefits of trade agreements? In addition, is Africa terminating its old debts only to enter into a new round of indebtedness? According to a recent IMF report, lending by China in Africa has risen to \$5 billion in 2004, double the figure a decade earlier (Beattie and Callan 2006). Will this help cripple African economies once again, or might these debts be written off eventually? Finally, how viable is the model of the socialist-market economy for African nations today? The development of socialism requires a strong centralized state; yet many will agree that the problem of modern Africa has been the strong state. Besides, others argue that China is less a socialist-market economy than a capitalist enterprise or a form of “Leninist corporatism” (Hutton 2007). Only the next thirty years will show whether or not we are witnessing a new global relationship or just another epoch in the long scramble for Africa.

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Market Economy and Polarization in Income Distribution in China

Yang Shengming

1

The phenomenon of polarization in China's distribution area is currently reflected in the following four ways:

1. The Gini coefficient (a measure of income disparity) is significantly higher than the internationally accepted value. This deserves attention.

Internationally, it is generally held that a Gini coefficient of 0.4 should be a warning. In 1979, China's Gini coefficient was 0.33, while since the reform, this index has been rapidly increasing. According to the collaborative investigation conducted by the People's University and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, China's Gini coefficient reached 0.53 in 2004. In addition, data from the Human Development Report 2004 released by the United Nations indicates that the Gini coefficient in China is between 0.45 and 0.53. Polarization in China's income distribution is very serious.

2. The income proportion of the top 20 percent wealthiest people relative to the 20 percent poorest people is too high.

According to information from the World Bank, in 1998 the ratio of the income of the wealthiest 20 percent to the income of the poorest 20 percent in China is 8:1, while the ratio in India is

5.7. Obviously, income differentials in China are more significant than those in India. The ratio of the income of the wealthiest 20 percent to the poorest 20 percent in the United States was 8.6 in 1947, 7.5 in 1973, 11.5 in 1993, and 11.4 in 2001. Over the past fifty years, income differentials in the United States have been increasing more rapidly than those in China and India.

3. Income differentials between urban and rural residents are steadily increasing.

The ratio of incomes of urban residents to rural residents in China has increased from 2.36 in 1978 (beginning of the opening-up and reform policy) to 3.2 in 2004, while the consumption ratios during the corresponding period increased from 2.5 to 3.6. According to some research, if all sorts of invisible income other than urban wages are included, the current ratio of urban to rural income is between 5 and 6 (Wang 2004, 312–20). The urban-rural income differential in China is too big. As one person noted, “life in the city is like that in Europe, while life in the country is like that in Africa.”

4. Polarization among different areas is intensifying, and income differentials between western and eastern areas tend to increase. This can be illustrated taking the disparities between Jiangsu Province and Guizhou Province, Zhejiang Province and Qinghai Province as the examples.

Table 1 shows that the income disparity between two eastern and two western areas over the past twenty years has increased by over 85 percent. These data establish the fact that polarization in income distribution emerged in China in its process of seeking common prosperity, which is a problem deserving serious examination. At the very beginning of the opening-up and reform policy, Deng Xiaoping warned us against polarization. He pointed out that “the purpose of socialism is to realize the common prosperity of people all over the country, not polarization. If there is polarization, the reform will have been a failure; if a certain type of new bourgeoisie occurs, then we are really off the track” (Deng 1983, 110–11). He further pointed out that the “the essence of socialism is to liberate and develop the productive forces, eradicate exploitation, abolish social polarization (373). Twenty years have

Table 1 Disparities between various areas in China.

item region	National income per capita in 1986 (RMB)	National income per capita in 2004 (RMB)	Increase from 1986 to 2004
Jiangsu Province	1064	20705	18.5
Guizhou Province	406	4215	9.4
Ratio of the two provinces	2.6:1	4.9:1	88.5%
Zhejiang Province	1042	23942	22.0
Qinghai Province	698	8606	11.3
Ratio of the two provinces	1.5:1	2.8:1	86.7%

Data source: calculated using data from *China Statistical Yearbook*.

passed; when we reread these remarks of Deng Xiaoping now, we can feel how important they are. We must earnestly implement them. It is a significant problem closely involved with constructing a harmonious society.

2

Why does polarization occur? In brief, both objective factors and subjective factors play roles. In the objective aspect, polarization is the result of the operation of objective laws in a market economy. Let us make a brief analysis on this point.

First, polarization is the result of the operation of the law of value, the fundamental law of the market economy. The law of value is the law about the determination and operation of value; in other words, it is the law about production and exchange based on the magnitude of value. It is called “the invisible hand” for short. As is well known, the magnitude of value of a certain commodity is determined and measured according to the socially necessary volume of labor (or the socially necessary labor time) embodied in its production. It is the social standard and yardstick to evaluate the superiority and inferiority of numerous producers in a given industry, and the silent command and ruthless whip to

press the producers to march on and on. Among the numerous producers producing the same kind of commodities, those who satisfy this standard can obtain normal profit; those who satisfy this standard by using less labor time can obtain excess profit and make a fortune; those who consume more time because of using low-quality labor and cannot satisfy this standard not only cannot obtain profit but also will suffer losses and even become bankrupt, and thus join the unemployed population and become poor. This is the differential function of the law of value. Besides the positive functions (or positive effects) of adjusting production and circulation and promoting the enhancement of the technical level and management level, the law of value also has its negative functions (or negative effects)—differentiating and breaking-up producers. These two kinds of functions coexist, interacting with each other. We should not recognize the former and deny the latter. Since the implementation of market economy, the law of value has fully demonstrated its differentiating and breaking up functions in China. In face of the law of value, successful people become rich and can live like in paradise, while losers become utterly destitute and live like in a hell. This is the polarization of producers as a result of the law of value.

Polarization also stems from the law of distribution according to labor in the market economy. Distribution of the fruits of labor among workers, whether in the socialist system or in the capitalist system, is based on the quantity and quality of labor. In short, distribution according to labor, an objective law in the sphere of distribution, is adopted in both systems. It is not a law unique to socialism, but a common law in human society. The law of distribution according to labor is simply the extension and transformation of the aforesaid law of value in the sphere of distribution. In his discussion about distribution according to labor, Marx once explicitly pointed out that “as far as the distribution of the latter [means of consumption—Ed.] among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity equivalents: a given amount of labor in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labor in another form” (1989, 86). As we know, the law of value has the function of

differentiating and breaking up producers of commodities. By the same token, the law of distribution according to labor also has the function of differentiation and breaking up, leading to polarization in the distribution area.

Polarization is also caused by the law of capital accumulation in the market economy. Capital in the socialist system is a mixture, including government capital, private capital, foreign capital, and so on. Different sources of capital reflect different socioeconomic relationships, and have their own particular sublaws of capital accumulation. Accumulation of private capital and foreign capital will in essence inevitably lead to the emergence of polarization, namely, the scale of capital becomes larger and larger, while that part of income distributed to workers decreases. This phenomenon has occurred in quite a few eastern areas. More important is that the law of an ever-increasing organic composition of capital (or the law that the materials of production are favored to increase) not only exists in the capitalist system, but also in the socialist system; it is the common law in the economic operation of human society. In the socialist system, due to the continuous increase of organic composition of capital, the proportion of capital used for living labor in the total capital comparatively declines, which may result in the emergence of the pauperization problem.

To sum up, under the circumstances of no government intervention, complete adjustment by the market, and the functioning of the aforesaid three laws at their discretion, income differentials will continue to be enlarged, and inevitably result in polarization. The practice of market economy in the capitalist system has proved this point,* and corresponding measures have been taken for correction. The socialist-market economy might also face the problem, and it is likely that the correction policy of the government—being more people-oriented—will give consideration to the workers.

3

At present, since polarization in China is the result of economic laws, is it unchangeable? In other words, are we entirely powerless before it? The answer is no. Stalin carried out a scientific analysis of these kinds of problems and gave an incisive point of view. He wrote:

Leaving aside astronomical, geological and other similar processes, which, even if he has come to know the laws of their development, man really is powerless to influence, in many other cases man is very far from powerless, in the sense of being able to influence the processes of nature. In all such cases, having come to know the laws of nature, reckoning with them and relying on them, and intelligently applying and utilizing them, man can restrict their sphere of action, and can impart a different direction to the destructive forces of nature and convert them to the use of society. . . .

. . . The same must be said of the laws of economic development, the laws of socialism. Here, too, the laws of economic development, as in the case of natural science, are objective laws, reflecting processes of economic development which take place independently of the will of man. Man may discover these laws, get to know them and, relying upon them, utilize them in the interests of society, impart a different direction to the destructive action of some of the laws, restrict their sphere of action, and allow fuller scope to other laws that are forcing their way to the forefront. (1971, 316–17)

This is the correct attitude of Marxists toward objective economic laws. A comparison of our attitudes toward the above-mentioned three laws, i.e., the law of value, law of distribution according to labor, and law of capital accumulation, shows that many problems exist. Due to limits on the length of this article, we discuss only three problems:

(1) Cognition of the negative effects of the market and its laws

During the period of planned economy, the market was considered equivalent to capitalism and was regarded as a great scourge, so people tried their best to annihilate it. When the market economy was established, the market was described as the panacea, leaving nothing to be desired, and omnipotent. Consequently, market-omnipotence theory and market-worship theory spread rapidly and filled the circles of theory. These two types

of one-sidedness have caused a lot of harm. Just like all other things, the market has its duality and plays dual roles. Allocation of resources by the market can certainly help mobilize and bring into play the enthusiasm and creativity of various actors, and help enhance efficiency and promote the development of productivity. However, market opportunity, market information, market decision-making capability, market operation means, and so on are not equally enjoyed by individuals or individual enterprises, and the disparities in these respects might be very large. Therefore, some individuals or enterprises gain from market activities while others may suffer losses. Even for those who gain, there exist differences in profit margin. Thus, though there is only one market, the market players are differentiated into various ranks. The dual roles of market and its laws of operation can make a group of people rich and also lead to polarization in the sphere of distribution, resulting in more poor people. The people did not have a comprehensive understanding of this in the past and overemphasized the positive effects of market, while neglecting its negative effects, let alone adopting corresponding policies against the negative effects.

(2) Cognition of the effective range of the market and its laws of operation

Is market the ubiquitous, eternal omnipotent dominator? In other words, is the operation of the market effective in the whole range of the society? Is there no limit for the function of the law of value? Some people believe this is unquestionable and deserves no further discussion. In our opinion, this is a significant factor contributing to polarization in the sphere of distribution to which adequate attention should be paid. In recent years, by taking advantage of market mechanism, overnight millionaires have appeared in some industries in which the market should not operate. "Market prices" prevail in some monopolistic industries that lack market competition, engendering a lot of rich people. Nine-year compulsory education should definitely not be an area in which the market dominates, but omnifarious "market prices" turn some schools providing compulsory education services into a bustling market swarmed with visitors. In some places where

market should not exist, there are quite a few gray markets, yellow markets, black markets, etc., producing also some rich individuals. In a word, the evil consequences of market domination of the whole range of the society is gradually revealing itself. As a result, the situation in which the law of value is exceeding its functions and meddles into other areas can no longer be tolerated. As early as the beginning of the last century, the phenomenon of market failure, namely, situations in which market cannot or should not play roles, was observed in modern economics. To bring fully the functions of market into play, it is necessary to establish the demarcation line between market and nonmarket, defining the activity space of market and its laws of operation and preventing the market from entering incorrect areas or areas in which it fails to function properly. This, both theoretically and practically, is the indispensable part of establishing the socialist-market economic system with Chinese characteristics.

(3) Cognition of the positions and roles of government and market in income distribution

The relationships between efficiency and equity are in essence those between market and government. Practice in the recent twenty years has proved again and again that in regard to such relationships, the government, due to its pursuit of efficiency, i.e., more rapid GDP growth, or to the limit on its own financial capacity, sometimes hands over to the market equity problems that should be in its charge, hoping that the market mechanism can solve them. For example, problems such as compulsory education mentioned above, public health, civil servants' wages, and so on, should be tackled by the government in a consistent manner, but since no measures have been taken by the government, the market mechanism is primarily being resorted to. As a consequence, incomes of civil servants differ to a surprising extent not only in different regions, but even in different sectors of the same region and the same city, which not only goes against efficiency, but also is detrimental to equity. Such rapid growth of income differentials between urban and rural residents is to some extent related to the inadequacy of the government policy of "subsidizing agriculture."

There truly exists “the law of diminishing revenue” in crop cultivation, while the “diminished” part can only be compensated by the government, for the market can do nothing about it. These examples illustrate that proper understanding and handling of the positions and functions of government and market in income distribution, especially the explicit definition of the responsibilities that should be born by the government, are of great importance in tackling the problem of polarization.

4

For the purpose of containing, weakening, and stopping the tendency of rapid development of polarization resulting from market and its laws of operation based on the proper resolution of the above-mentioned three “cognition” problems, we put forward the following policies that should be adopted, and important systems that should be established:

1. Establish the demarcation between market and nonmarket; define the space in which market operates, and prevent the market from entering incorrect areas or areas in which it will fail to function.

Demarcation between market and nonmarket varies depending on the time, place, and condition, which may differ significantly in different countries or in different periods of a certain country. Generally speaking, the market can play proper roles in the areas of economy in which competition dominates and the principle of exchange of equal value prevails; whereas it can hardly function properly in the areas that are characterized by natural monopoly and in which the principle of exchange of equal value can hardly work. Therefore, competition and exchange of equal value can be taken as the two boundary marks between market and nonmarket, according to which, and upon further consideration of the different social effects of the use value of products, we can divide the socioeconomic activities into three areas, namely market area, semimarket area, and nonmarket area. Any industry marked by competition and dominated by the principle of exchange of equal value belongs to the market area. Such an industry is the paradise of market and, being the largest area of economy of China,

occupies the principal position in its socialist-market economy. Any area featured by natural monopoly in which no competition exists belongs to the nonmarket area. The market should be forbidden from entering areas such as public health, compulsory education, public goods of the society, etc. Organs of state power (administration, legislature, judicial administration), ideology as well as ethical and moral issues, etc. should be in the nonmarket area. Socioeconomic activities lying between the above two areas, in which competition exists but strong externalities make it difficult to implement exchange of equal value, belong to the semi-market area. The same method of division is also applicable to the interior of some industries and sectors. For instance, in the education sector, compulsory education belongs to the nonmarket area, graduate education belongs to the market area, while undergraduate education, junior college education, and senior high school education can be in the semimarket area. Based on this division method, the market should be in charge of the resource allocation in the market area, the government in the nonmarket area, while market and government should cooperate in resource allocation in the semimarket area. The purpose of making such divisions is to solve fully the problem of some sectors or industries entertaining both resources allocated by the market and those allocated by the government, while other sectors or industries lack the minimum resources, and so promote the harmonious development of socioeconomic activities.

2. Establish a social accounting matrix adapted to the requirements of the market economy; make the market economy a transparent economy; make public the performance of market competitors; and block sources of corruption.

In recent years, astonishing news often appears in newspapers: the national revenues have suffered a drain amounting to hundreds of billions. If people look into the sources of such information, what they get are either conjectures or estimates. In comparison, in some Western countries, income may be concealed by some minister or president or the amount of taxes dodged can be investigated to the accuracy of two figures after the decimal point, which is adequately convincing to outsiders. The root cause of this

significant difference is whether or not a social accounting matrix adapted to the market economy is in place. Simply speaking, in a social accounting matrix, data on revenue and expenditure of each individual sector, firm, unit, and even each individual is on record, which is accessible anywhere in the country by means of a network. Thus, the social accounting matrix makes the market economy a transparent economy. In the Western world, no one is sure that no grey income, black income, etc. exists, but the deterrence power of the social accounting matrix can help reduce activities generating such incomes, for even if presidents or prime ministers conceal their income or dodge taxes, they fear being detected. In contrast, in China, lack of an adequate social accounting matrix makes it hard to get data on revenue and expenditure of each unit, firm, and individual, and it is even harder to know where the money comes from and where it goes. Under such circumstances, it is not clear how much a unit or an individual earns. Thus, black income, grey income, and taxes evaded by firms or individuals can hardly be detected. Consequently, it is no wonder that corruption breeds and pervades.

It should be emphasized that an adequate social accounting matrix is not only required to establish a proper tax system, to block corruption, and to promote social equity, but is also required to position the national macroregulation and decision-making on a reliable and credible basis. Without accurate data and with a flood of falsified accounting and forged information, can we make scientific decisions? All in all, establishing and improving the social accounting matrix in China is definitely a very pressing and significant task.

3. Improve and strengthen the social security system, safeguarding the unemployed, the retired, the disabled, and people with low income, ensuring their the basic living conditions and perserving stability of socioeconomic life.

People now have an ever-clearer understanding of the important role of the social security system. The primary problem currently existing is the disparity between demand and supply, with demand far surpassing supply and the social security fund unable to make ends meet. Financing the fund should be secured

on the principle of a joint burden borne by the nation, unit, and individual. Collection should be intensified, and refusal to turn over the money should be firmly countered. Apart from the existing channels for fundraising, it is necessary to appropriate more capital from sales of state-owned assets for this purpose, and allot all taxes on interest tax and part of the income tax collected from high-income taxpayers to the fund. In addition, the national finance budget should give more subsidies to areas related to the basic living conditions such as housing, medical services, education, and so on. Determination of standards guaranteeing basic living conditions should be duly adjusted in conformity with the economic development and the economic power of the country. Limited by the national conditions of China, these standards should not be too high. The “welfare disease” suffered in the northern European countries deserves attention.

4. Improve the wage system, integrating various incomes into wages, and implement normal wage increases in accordance with the principle of distribution primarily according to labor.

The principle of distribution according to labor adopted in China should be reflected primarily by the wage system. The current wage system, however, exists in name only. The proportion of wages in people’s income has decreased to 1/2, 1/3, 1/5, or even 1/100, 1/200. Workers no longer rely primarily on wage income, but on other income. Thus, wages can no longer mobilize the enthusiasm and creativity of workers. Once retired, incomes other than wage are no longer available, and the workers will suffer a disastrous decline in living standards, so people are usually afraid of retiring. This situation should not continue any longer, and effective measures must be taken to improve the wage system, integrating various incomes into the wages, ensuring normal wage increases, guaranteeing that the proportion of wage income be no less than 80 percent of the total income, and making the wage truly represent the principle of better pay for better work and also making public the income of individuals.

5. Increase farmers’ income by every possible way, and ensure the roughly synchronized income increase of rural and urban residents.

Changes in the income differentials between urban and rural residents in China might take place in three stages, i.e., an increasing stage, a stable stage, and decreasing stage. Twenty years have already passed for the first stage, and the tendency of the income differential to increase should be reversed, halting its growth in an unrestricted manner. The second phase should be entered with the beginning of the Eleventh Five-year Plan, i.e., the phase in which income increases of urban and rural residents can achieve synchronization. The synchronized increase in income can roughly keep the status quo, and might last at least twenty years. It is likely that in the middle of the twenty-first century we can enter the decreasing phase. The suggestion that we should enter the decreasing stage now, is absolutely desirable in my opinion, but is not feasible.

On the question of how to increase farmers' income, we are not entirely hopeless. Major measures include: (1) make a great effort to develop farming, forestry, husbandry, fishery, traditional handicraft industry, tourist industry, and various modern service industries; (2) encourage and train more workers to work out of home, including both permanent work and seasonal and temporary work; (3) increase farm subsidies for farmers. The annual subsidy each farmer can get from the government is on average about \$11,000 in the United States, \$3,500 in the EU, while only \$50 in China. Agreements related to China's accession to the WTO permit a subsidy equivalent to 9 percent of total agricultural output value to the farmers, a level of which we are far from reaching; (4) resolutely protect farmers' income through tenure of land. Land is the root basis for farmers to settling down and getting on with their pursuit, but in some places farmers were deprived of land with no compensation—even if compensated, the money some get is negligible. As a result, farmers are forced onto the road to ruin. Income from tenure of land should constitute the primary part of farmers' income and the basic source for their subsistence, which should be guaranteed.

6. Earnestly solve the problem of too significant income differentials between the eastern and western areas, and promote the coordinated development of both areas.

Due to historical reasons and differences in natural conditions, a significant gap has formed in the level of economic development between eastern and western areas. Correspondingly, income differentials are fairly big. Solving such problems is a historical task requiring a long period of time. It should be possible, however, to contain or prevent too big a differential, and even to reduce gradually the differential by means of proper measures. During the planned economy period, especially in the 1950s and 1960s when China was newly established, the policy of regional allowance was largely adopted to keep the rough equivalence of incomes earned by people working in the eastern and western areas. In this way, the phenomenon of migration to the southeast areas did not appear. It seems that this measure should also be taken at present. Any person working in the western area should be given a certain amount of regional allowance, which will be cancelled if he leaves the area. Such subsidies should guarantee that workers with similar competency who work respectively in the eastern areas and western areas can get roughly equal reward to help retain local talents. This type of allowance should be collectively arranged by the government under the item of transfer payment in its budget.

The purpose of taking these measures is to redress and iron out the polarization resulting from the market and its laws of operation. Whether such a goal can be reached depends on the result of the interaction between the government and the market. All these measures are in the interest of promoting the growth and development of a harmonious society in a socialist country.

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NOTE

*Scholars from the School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University, have proved this point by means of mathematical models. See Wu and Zhao 2004.

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The Absent Father: Patriarchy and Social Order in the Films of Zhang Yimou

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According to some film critics, the genre of melodrama in general “indicates a site of ideological critique. . . . The ‘social’ itself—the workplace, politics—enters the familial configurations of subjectivity through the mediations of the father” (Browne et al. 1994, 41). With specific reference to the “contemporary cinema of the [Chinese] People’s Republic,” melodrama is said to renegotiate “the relation between tradition and modernization. . . . This social order is ultimately subordinated to the system of hierarchy and patronage that supports the political power of patriarchal socialism” (42). The father-figure, hence, is seen as vital in underpinning a cinematic narrative about modern Chinese society. A sharp focus on the father-figure, such theory implies, would reward one with a vital clue in unraveling the ideological message of the film.

This interpretive matrix I find of particular relevance and usefulness in surveying the trajectory of China’s most internationally acclaimed filmmaker, Zhang Yimou. And yet in applying it to his films, we find that a strange asymmetry reveals itself. Zhang’s earlier films, from the late 1980s to the mid-90s, provide in general a striking illustration of the theory’s direct benefits. Many of the films are indeed centered on exceedingly powerful, often tyrannical, patriarchs, father-figures in the broadest sense. Some

notable examples are the vicious and impotent mill owner in *Ju Dou* (1991), the capricious master of the harem in *Raise the Red Lantern* (1992), and the conniving, all-powerful Mafioso boss in *Shanghai Triad* (1995). For all the differences between these films, they are united in depicting a patriarchy that is as omnipresent as it is omnipotent, and the red thread running through the films, lending them dramatic unity and moral purpose, is the confrontation with its iniquities.

To apply this scheme to many of Zhang's later films, however, is to obtain surprising results. Family narrative, again in the broadest sense, remains as predominant, but the father-figure, so overpowering up to and including *Shanghai Triad*, is now conspicuously . . . *absent*. Such absence appears all the more incongruent because the later movies veer increasingly from drama to melodrama—in that the general tone of the films becomes less tragic and more comic, and allows far greater room for the consoling, at least bitter-sweet, *dénouement*, so characteristic of the genre, as compared with the utterly dismal conclusions of most earlier films. Thus in *Not One Less* (1999), a teenage girl-teacher in a remote village goes on her own to the city to try and bring back one of her pupils. The story revolves around children on their own, whether studying or at work, whereas not a single significant adult personage, let alone an all-powerful male, is depicted. In *Happy Times* (2000), possibly Zhang's quintessential "melodrama," not merely one patriarch is missing but actually *two*: the blind girl protagonist, Wu Ying, has been abandoned by her father and spends her time dreaming of his return, which will never take place, and confronted with a hated stepmother who would have nothing of her, while the middle-aged male protagonist, the gentle-hearted Zhao, merely fantasizes, equally to no avail, about forming his own family. The omnipresent/potent father has vanished to leave a glaringly blank space. While the earlier films were structured around the hopeless struggle to resist the patriarchal subjugation and exorcise the father-figure, the later ones repeatedly reveal characters who are essentially orphans, seeking either to refind a father or somehow to replace him adequately.

Perhaps the best illustration of this peculiar shift in Zhang's treatment of patriarchy can be obtained by comparing two scenes of funeral marches, the one from the early *Ju Dou*, the other from a film made almost a decade later, *The Road Home* (1999). In the context of both, the marches are of vital significance, but their meaning is diametrically opposed. In *Ju Dou* the couple of illicit lovers are forced to mourn publicly the death of their hated oppressor, the wretched mill owner, in order to dispel the rumors that they were having an affair behind his back. The long funeral march, in which they are humiliated into faking feats of agony and grief, proceeds as the posthumous triumph of the abhorrent patriarch, and leaves the couple behind it exhausted and weeping on the road, utterly defeated by the social order they were bold enough to defy. *The Road Home* begins and ends with the preparations of an entire village for the ceremonial burial of the old village teacher, who dedicated his life to educating generations of peasant kids. The film revolves around the emotional farewell gesture, especially of the wife and son, to a beloved father-figure, who, once gone, is missed most deeply and sincerely. Even the contrast in demeanor is remarkable: from the enacted screams and shrieks, tearing of hair and histrionic rolling on the ground of *Ju Dou*, all betokening fake grief, to the respectful marching in concentrated silence and genuine sorrow of *The Road Home*.

From the asphyxiating *omnipresence* of the patriarch we have hence moved to its painful *omni-absence*, as it were; and the question is: what accounts for that radical change of pattern and what does it reveal?

Zhang has sometimes been reproached by Western critics for losing his critical edge, and turning from an independent artist to one basking in the sunshine of consensus, even catering to Chinese officialdom. Yet such a charge, I think, is misplaced. Zhang's trajectory is misconstrued if it is seen as a progress from critique to conformity. For one thing, Zhang has never been merely a "critic." Some of his early films—notably *Ju Dou*, *Raise The Red Lantern*, and *Shanghai Triad*—have been widely considered as veiled critical allegories of Chinese Communism, which, to elude censorship, have been placed in the pre-Communist era. But such

films must *also* be taken at face value: namely as critiques of the *prerevolutionary* conditions, and concomitantly as *affirmations* of the achievements of the Revolution, celebrating the hard-won gains of the Chinese people (notably *Red Sorghum*, 1987, Zhang's first film).^{*} This is not to say that critique of the Communist era has been capriciously read into Zhang's films, for indeed they partly legitimize such readings. In his epic *To Live* (1994), moreover, there is an explicit confrontation with the persecutions and sufferings brought about by the Cultural Revolution. But those disappointed by the allegedly uncritical turn represented by Zhang's recent films have mistaken his agenda for something it has never been: a simply liberal, pro-Western one, pitting the "blessings" of "individual freedom" against the "evils" of "communal oppression." Such unwarranted expectations, furthermore, seem to lead such critics to overlook the fact that many of Zhang's recent films, far from toeing the line, are profoundly critical, maybe even *more so* than in the past. Zhang remains an involved and, by his own admission, *political* filmmaker; but his critical view is bound to disappoint some of his Western admirers since, far from conforming to a liberal agenda, its edge is increasingly turned *in scrutiny of China's ongoing Westernizing*.

I would suggest that in order to understand Zhang's changing portrayal of patriarchy, it is necessary to situate the films in historical context. The earlier films simultaneously reflect and negotiate the prerevolutionary tradition on one level, and, on another, some aspects of the Maoist legacy, above all the shadow of the Cultural Revolution. Correspondingly, they address the problematic of totalizing control, exemplified by towering, domineering, ruthless patriarchs. But as the years pass, the focus increasingly shifts from the past, both of prerevolutionary times and of the Mao era, to deal with the present. Hence the films begin to reflect ever more the commotion and specific conditions of the post-Mao society, with its emphasis on the mixed economy. And with regard to the process often referred to as "liberalization," what the engaged artist perceives is no teleological progress of ever-growing betterment. To be sure, especially in his spectacular Wuxia sagas, above all in *House of Flying Daggers* (2004), one can find an upholding

of personal and erotic fulfillment, even as these collide with communal normative expectations. But there is more to the post-Mao era than greater individual freedom; the other side of the coin is a greater sense of individual isolation and the dangers of cynicism and materialism. The “smashing of the iron bowl of rice,” partly accomplished in the Deng Xiaoping era, might have been an emancipating gesture—as far as the “iron” is concerned—but it also signified a loss of social security and solidarity for many—in “the rice” part of the metaphor. And that, I think, is what Zhang’s later films are mostly about.

Films such as *Not One Less*, *Keep Cool*, and *Happy Times* represent a kind of Chinese neorealism, in which focus on daily life and its essential struggles serves to bring to the fore the perspective of the social losers, so to speak, of market liberalization and accelerated industrialization, those who have lost more rice than iron. As Zhang himself asserted in an interview:

“Happy Times” is not a political story, but rather a story about life. However, there are many details that can reflect today’s society. Such as everybody trying to make money. Money is very important in our life today. For example, in the film the mother will only see money, but not people, not the boyfriend. Whoever has money is her boyfriend. This kind of satire can be read politically as well. (Quoted in Ross 2002)

Is this not a confrontation—however indirect—with Deng’s epoch-making motto of “It doesn’t matter if a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice”? Appropriately, to such social realities, the corresponding melodramatic account would not be one that deals with tyrannical father-figures, but rather one that registers a sense of social orphanhood; hence the move from early depictions of paternalistic excess to the absence of the father, typical of the later films—from an overpowering father to none at all; from the unceasing intervention of the state in one’s life to a feeling that one has been left to one’s own devices; from the pressing need to displace the patriarch to the quest of recovering familial care, of finding a surrogate parent, as it were: the girl teacher in *Not One Less* who brings back the child who had to stop studying and start

working since his family could not support him; Zhao in *Happy Times* who tries to console the abandoned girl by writing her letters in her father's name, etc.

In *The Road Home*, the father who is laid to rest is the lynchpin of a powerfully nostalgic narrative. The present—filmed in cheerless monochrome—does not compare well with the past—filmed in radiant colors and accompanied by a melodious, warm soundtrack. The deceased father-figure was an idealist, who came from the town to the countryside to become the village's first teacher. He immediately wins the ardent and devout love of the simple peasant girl—who, it is worth adding, lives with her mother alone, as the father had died. Their love affair sparkles instantaneously, and it is clearly not the man alone whom the girl takes to, but the social project he embodies, of transcending social distances and hierarchies. Their son is a respected and successful businessman, but he remains alone, unmarried, in the “grey” present.

Interestingly, in Zhang's penultimate film, *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles* (2005), the absent father-figure makes a comeback of sorts. The film tells the story of a reserved and hardened Japanese father who attempts to heal his long-shattered relationship with his son who is lying on his deathbed, and does this throughout a voyage into the Chinese mainland. Revealingly, it is a story of making amends for years of alienation and suppressed emotions, which were followed by a long absence. Though hardly political, the film can be read, in the light of Zhang's trajectory, as an attempt to point at a possible solution to the historical predicament of Chinese patriarchy. A familial—read *social*—model that assigns the father absolute power will not do, but just as little acceptable is one in which the father is allowed to eschew his obligations and to disappear from the scene completely. Only a combination of individual freedom with communal solidarity, Zhang's narratives seem to suggest, would be an adequate social model for China to pursue.

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NOTE

*In that sense, it seems appropriate that Zhang's famous former partner and other leading "fifth generation" filmmaker, Chen Kaige, has finally taken residence outside China, since his films indeed reflect a straightforward rejection of the Chinese revolution, as is evident, for example, in his *Farewell My Concubine*.

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Domestic and International Class Struggle in a Harmonious Socialist-Oriented Market Economy

Erwin Marquit

In his eulogy at the graveside of Marx, Engels pointed to the two great discoveries of Marx, the discovery of the materialist conception of history and the discovery of surplus value as the source of capitalist profit. Surplus value is the difference between the value created by the worker and the value returned to the worker in the form of wages. Surplus value is therefore the value of the worker's labor time that is appropriated by the capitalist. In this manner, Marx disclosed the irreconcilable conflict of interest between capital and labor—the capitalists striving to increase their profits by increasing the ratio of surplus value to wages, while the interest of the worker lies in decreasing that ratio. The struggle of the workers to raise their wages or to resist attempts by the capitalist to lower them is an essential component of class struggle.

If the conflict between labor and capital is irreconcilable as long as the capitalist mode of production exists, how then does the class struggle manifest itself in a socialist-oriented market economy? And how does it differ from class struggle in a capitalist economy? The key to the answer to these questions lies in the class nature of the state. In a capitalist economy, the primary social function of the state is to ensure the stability of the prevailing capitalist relations of production—that is, the property relations. The

capitalists, as a class, also use their control of the state to further their own interests at the expense of the workers. In the United States, for example, income from taxation of the working population is used to fund imperialist aggression abroad. It is also used to provide profits for various corporations involved in providing social services.

Legislation concerning patents is a source of tremendous profits for the pharmaceutical industry. The National Labor Relations Board, originally created to protect workers' rights, has become a major vehicle for preventing unionization, and to a large extent is responsible for the decrease in private-sector labor unions from 35 percent in the 1950s to 7 percent today. Its members, appointed by the executive branch of the government, consistently side with employers in their disputes with the workers, often delaying elections for union representation by ten years, failing to protect workers from being fired for prounion activities, etc.

In a socialist-oriented market economies, state power is exercised by representatives of the working class and peasantry, the leading role being guided by parties of the working class. Although representatives of the capitalist sector might participate in some political and economic governmental bodies, and even in the Communist Party itself, their role is limited to consultation.

The goal of the corporate capitalist is not merely profit, or even average profit, but maximum profit. In the capitalist world, the corporate sector uses every possible means, legal and illegal, to maximize its profit: fighting against unionization of the enterprises, cutting wages and health-care benefits, hiding its profits from the tax authorities, illegal price fixing, using undocumented workers to undercut the current wage scales and depriving such workers of employer contributions to pensions and other non-wage benefits, exporting operations to lower-wage countries, and so on. In the capitalist countries today, class struggle expresses itself in the continual battle of the workers against these efforts to maximize profits on the backs of the workers and other sectors of the population exploited by monopoly capital.

In the developed capitalist countries, the state consistently aids monopoly capital's effort to maximize profit. One of the

consequences of this in relation to other countries is that investments in less-developed countries, designed as they are to maximize profits, leads to unbalanced development in these countries. Such unbalanced development is further exacerbated by foreign-policy measures, so-called economic aid, and policies of international monetary organizations that are under the domination of the imperialist countries.

In the socialist-oriented countries, the state pursues policies that maximize balanced economic development of its productive capacity. Even though investment is open to domestic and foreign capital, the state, with its regulatory powers and with the credit system not under the control of the capitalists, is able to guide domestic and foreign investments in directions that are in the interests of the people as a whole

In this situation, despite some similarities, there are fundamental differences in the way class struggle manifests itself in relation to the capitalist sector. The subjective goal of the capitalists—maximum profit—remains the same, but it is a different playing field. The state can require the capitalist corporations to recognize labor unions formed at their enterprises, as China has done, for example, with Wal-Mart, which has a history of shutting down its stores rather than recognize a labor union in the United States. The state can set minimum wages and conditions for occupational health and safety, and require enterprises to provide coverage for health care, pensions, child care, vacations, unemployment insurance, and other benefits for their workers. In the capitalist countries, state regulatory and legislative bodies also provide protections and social services to the working class, but these are consequences of long persevering struggles by the working class only after the ruling capitalists conclude that their rule would be endangered were these concessions not made to the working class. Upon granting these concessions, the capitalists seek every opportunity to weaken or eliminate them. In the United States, monopoly capital is mounting a campaign to reduce the retirement benefits under the federal government's Social Security program. A major strike issue in the United States today is over the attempt by the employers to increase the workers' share of the cost of health insurance.

In socialist-oriented market economies, the state, representing the interests of the working class, can be a powerful negotiating force for the workers in setting the wages and benefits and other conditions of employment. In this way, the locus of class struggle between capital and labor shifts from that between the workers and their employers to between the employers and the state. The state, however, cannot replace unions. In order to avoid sharp confrontational class relations, the labor unions need to be organized from the bottom up—that is, with the participation of workers at the rank-and-file level in the organizing process and election of their union officers. This is necessary so that the regional labor-union leadership can be adequately informed of the needs and demands of the workers of the enterprise during negotiations of collective-bargaining agreements. In this way, the regional labor-union body, with the support of appropriate state bodies, if necessary, can exert direct pressure on the enterprises to reach a reasonable settlement with the enterprise labor union.

The fact that the socialist-oriented market economies are in countries that are far less developed than the leading capitalist economies obviously limits the demands that the enterprise labor union or the state can make on the capitalist sector. The lower wage scales associated with this difference in levels of economic development make the opportunity for investment attractive to foreign and domestic capital, which in turn strengthens the bargaining position of the state in its negotiations on behalf of the working class, so that the workers need not rely on strikes to win their demands. The state, however, must take into account the needs of the capitalist sector to maintain a rate of profit comparable to that in the capitalist world market. As the economy develops, the level of worker skill and productivity rises, making it possible for the average wage to rise without adverse effects on competitiveness in the global market, as we already see happening in China and Vietnam. The ability of the state to raise the minimum wage becomes a powerful tool for the working class to ensure a continuing rise in average wage levels as productivity and levels of skill increase in the course of economic development.

As the economy grows in socialist-oriented market economies, the increased income from the profits of state-owned enterprises in the state sector and from taxes on the private sector can be used for the expansion of social services and other benefits to the population as part of the social consumption budget, which not only does not have adverse effects on the competitiveness of the state-owned and privately owned enterprises, but enhances their competitiveness by raising the levels of education, health, and culture of the labor force.

In this way, the basic living standards and conditions of labor of the working class can be established without labor-capital strife on the enterprise level. This condition of economic development can be described as harmonious development.

The capitalists, however, remain capitalists, and the temptation to increase profit at the expense of the workers is ever present and can lead to violations of the agreements between the capitalist employers on the one hand and the labor unions and the state on the other. Labor-union vigilance is therefore a necessary component of harmonious development. An effective shop-steward system of representation on the shop-floor level is the best mechanism for maintaining vigilant enforcement of existing agreements on living and working conditions, and is not in any way contradictory to the concept of harmonious development.

Let us now consider how the international character of class struggle affects the socialist-oriented market economies.

Economic globalization is the result of the objective developments of the forces of production. These developments of the forces of production include but are not limited to technological progress in transportation and information exchange; computerization of economic data processing; automation and robotization of production; growing numbers entering the work force; and rising levels of education. These factors facilitate the globalization of productive activity. This occurs by reducing obstacles in coordinating goods and services across great geographic and cultural divides. (Erwin Marquit, "What's Wrong with Globalization," *Political Affairs*, September 2006). In this way, globalization leads to internationalization of the labor force on a qualitatively

higher level. The campaign to unionize the workers of Wal-Mart in the United States can gain strength if the unions now being formed at Wal-Mart stores in China lead to better working and living conditions for the Chinese workers. It is important for labor unions in the United States and other developed capitalist countries, therefore, to develop cooperative relationships with their Chinese labor-union counterparts, a process that is beginning to unfold between U.S. and Chinese labor unions.

Globalization also places obligations on Chinese state-owned and private firms in their operations abroad to engage in labor practices that are models of labor-management relations. This is another reason for international consultation among Chinese labor unions and the labor movement in other countries. The need for international working-class solidarity is as relevant today as it was in 1848 when Marx and Engels called for “working men of all countries, unite!”

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Book Reviews

Black Power in the Belly of the Beast. Edited by Judson L. Jeffries. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006. 308 pages, cloth \$65; paper \$25.

Despite the enormous amount of literature dedicated to the history and legacy of the African American freedom struggle of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, very few studies have attempted to analyze the Black Power movement from a comprehensive perspective.* *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast* seeks to fill this void.

In this path-breaking volume, editor Judson L. Jeffries draws on leading scholars in this field of study as well as a cadre of community activists and researchers to explore the emergence of the Black Power movement, in all its permutations, from the formation groups such as the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) to the Deacons for Defense and Justice to the Black Liberation Army. Considered also are various leaders of these organizations. As Jeffries notes in his introduction, this collection rests on the notion that the “Black Power movement did not grow out of a vacuum . . . but [was] firmly rooted in [the] rich tradition of Black protest.” Its leaders were ignited with “a fiery oratory, a bold and unyielding style, and a steadfast commitment to meeting the daily needs of the community” (9–10).

Each of the eleven authors contained in this volume provides a unique perspective on the essence of the Black Power movement, linking it to a larger quest to uncover the primary role African American organizations and their charismatic leaders played in the creation, development, and eventual decline of this period of the Black freedom struggle. Specifically,

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Akbar Muhammad Ahmad, Donald Cunnigen, Floyd W. Hayes III, James A. Geschwender, Douglass G. Glasgow, William B. Helmreich, Harold A. Nelson, Christopher B. Strain, Akinyele O. Umoja, Komozi Woodward, and Jeffries himself implore the reader to reexamine the legacy of the Black Power movement in African American society since the late 1960s.

Within the pages of this volume, critically acclaimed sociologist James A. Geschwender, along with editor Jeffries, provides us with an intriguing and insightful look at the impact of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers on the nation's auto industry during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Focusing on the Sons of Watts Improvement Association (SWIA), Douglas G. Glasgow highlights the activities of another potent although lesser known Black Power organization that also garnered much of its support from urban working-class African Americans, while Jeffries's article sheds more light on the abilities of Black American city dwellers in the mid-sized cities of Baltimore, Cleveland, and Indianapolis to develop unique Black Power Party of Self-Defense chapters. Furthermore, the Christopher B. Stain and Donald Cunnigen essays describe the effect of the Deacons for Defense and Justice and the Republic of New Africa in the southern states of Louisiana and Mississippi respectively.

Finally, four authors—Akbar Muhammad Ahmad, Floyd W. Hayes III, Harold A. Nelson, and Komozi Woodard—with articles resting mostly on a community-activist perspective, explore both the triumphs and tragedies of several obscure Black Power organizations, such as the Revolutionary Action Movement, Us, the Defenders, the Modern Black Convention Movement, and the Newark Congress of African People. All in all, these scholars conclude that despite political philosophies running the gamut from Black nationalist to cultural nationalist to Marxist-Leninist, their quest to improve the lives of all African Americans never disappeared.

Without question, *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, adds much to our understanding of an important part of the Civil Rights movement that has received scant treatment from most scholars. This carefully crafted and meticulously researched volume is a very impressive book and a must read for anyone

sincerely interested in a complete analysis of the modern civil rights movement.

All parties involved in the venture should be commended for such a powerful piece. Its one major shortcoming is the lack of a detailed essay on the role African American women played during the period of the Black freedom struggle. Despite this weakness, the importance and impact of this book cannot be overstated. It truly adds much to the continuously expanding fields of African American history and Black Studies.

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NOTE

*See, for example, William L. DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992); Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York: Pantheon, 1992); John T. McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African-American Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1992); and Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2004).

On the Global Waterfront: The Fight to Free the Charleston 5.
By Suzan Erem and E. Paul Durrenberger. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008. 240 pages, paper \$17.95.

On 19 January 2000, 660 police in riot gear marched to a dock in Charleston, South Carolina, where 50 dockworkers were peacefully picketing a non-union ship. The show of military force was the opening wedge in a campaign to weaken or break Longshoremen's Local 1422. Local 1422 was an African American local that had been a mainstay of the civil rights movement in South Carolina. It was also the strongest union in "Right-to-Work-for-Less" South Carolina.

The number of dockers grew to 150 before the night was over. Eight dockworkers were arrested, and nine were treated at the hospital, including Ken Riley, president of Longshoreman's Local 1422. His head wound from a police club required twelve stitches. He was just talking to some of the men on the dock when the club hit him from behind. Although the arrested dockers were released by local courts, the ambitious state's attorney got a grand jury to charge five of the workers with "conspiracy to riot." The five included four African American longshoremen and one white checker. For the next twenty-two months, the five were under house arrest, allowed out only to go to work. They became known as "the Charleston Five."

In the skillful hands of the authors, Suzan Erem and E. Paul Durrenberger, this dramatic story reads like a thriller. *On the Global Waterfront* is definitely a good read. The book gives a carefully researched account of the military-style attack on the union dockworkers by the Charleston police, and the vindictive prosecution of five dockworkers by the state of South Carolina. The excellent documentation makes this book a valuable resource for future researchers.

The successful fightback led by Local 1422 is the heart of the book. A relatively unknown union local, with the help of broad national and international solidarity, won against an array of powerful anti-union enemies. On 9 June 2001, over 5000 supporters from all over the world marched to "Free the Charleston Five" in Columbus, South Carolina. International organizations of dockworkers promised to shut down their ports unless the Five were freed. With the help of such massive support, the Charleston dockworkers saved their union jobs and won freedom for the Charleston Five. Five months after the Columbus march, the state dropped the felony charges of "inciting to riot" and the defendants were freed.

The Charleston dockers' fight is a heroic, history-making struggle that goes beyond the basic economic issues and the civil liberties question of freedom of assembly. Their victory was also a victory for civil rights. Just days before the police assault on the dockers, over 46,000 people had marched to Columbia, the state

capital, to protest the flying of the Confederate flag. The dock unions were completely segregated in South Carolina; longshoremen and mechanics unions were African American, while the checkers were white. But all received the East Coast union wage scale. Repelling the union-busting violence was a matter of equality, of civil rights. When Barack Obama won the South Carolina primary by a large margin in 2008, it was because, I believe, the Charleston dockers had paved the way.

After much delay, Local 1422 won the support of its parent International Longshoremen's Association (ILA). For many months, the conservative leadership of the ILA stood in the way of official AFL-CIO action for the Charleston Five. When the ILA finally gave support, it was based on the recognition of common economic interests. The ILA could not afford to let non-union operators cut the wage scale in Charleston, an action that would have endangered the scale of the entire East Coast.

Capitalist globalization of the world's economy makes the lessons from Charleston highly relevant today. Maritime trades have long been a globalized industry, but factories and services now have also been globalized. The dominant corporations are transnational. How does labor fight back? *On the Global Waterfront* describes how Local 1422 has shown the way. When the companies are international, labor must go international. For example, the union I work with, United Steelworkers of the USA and Canada, has formed a strategic alliance with unions in the United Kingdom, Australia, Brazil, Germany, and Mexico.

There were many heroes in the Charleston Five campaign. We meet them in *On the Global Waterfront*. First and foremost is Ken Riley, first-term president of embattled Local 1422. To the world, he represented the Charleston longshoremen in their fight to save their union. It is a pleasure to read how he grew with the fight and expanded his outlook to cover the world. Next on the list of heroes are the militant leaders of the West Coast ILWU (International Longshore and Warehouse Union). Authors Erem and Durrenberger credit the ILWU with the first substantial funding for the fight. The ILWU also put Riley in touch with militant sections of U.S. labor that gave whatever support they

could to Local 1422. The ILWU also introduced Riley to waterfront unions in Europe, Asia, and Australia that were decisive in the eventual victory. Not least in the list of heroes are the longshoremen from Barcelona to Australia who threatened a work stoppage if the Five were not freed.

Another outstanding hero is Donna DeWitt, the white president of the South Carolina State Federation of Labor. As the first ranking AFL-CIO officer to come to their aid, DeWitt's support was invaluable. Twice I had the pleasure of hearing her speak in Chicago. She went wherever invited, wherever there was a chance to win solidarity for the Charleston Five. Then there was Bill Fletcher, assistant to John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO. At the national Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) convention, Riley met Fletcher, who immediately offered his full assistance. Fletcher helped Local 1422 develop a strategy for victory. He showed the necessary steps to bring the national labor movement behind the Charleston Five. Those efforts culminated in the June 9 march in Columbia to free the Charleston Five.

Here I must disagree with the authors' frequent negative remarks about the AFL-CIO leadership. For example, the first three listings under AFL-CIO in the book's index are: bureaucracy, ineffectiveness of, leadership nervous. It is true that AFL-CIO action was delayed by the lack of support from the ILA, Riley's parent union. Are the authors suggesting that the AFL-CIO could have gone over the head of the president of the AFL-CIO affiliate, the ILA? Extreme pressure did finally force John Bowers, ILA international president, to give public support to the Charleston Five. As soon as Bowers consented, the AFL-CIO went into high gear. They organized the march of 5000 for the Charleston Five. No doubt, Bowers also felt threatened by the reform movement in the ILA that Riley had been organizing. In delaying support for Local 1422, Bowers seemed to care more about keeping his office than saving the Longshoremen's Union. I believe there is more hope now for reforming the ILA. Since the Charleston Five victory, Riley has moved up to become an ILA international vice-president.

Much space in the book is given to Charlie Condon, the South Carolina States' Attorney. Condon hoped to make the longshoremen's case a springboard to catapult him into the governor's seat. But he had to move fast. On 2 February 2000, the local magistrate had dismissed trespassing charges for the eight men arrested. Condon quickly brought the state in to prosecute the men on the far more serious charge of riot, a felony. It could be said that Condon created the Charleston Five case. The authors write that most white Charlestonians believed that only an extremely ambitious ultra-rightist like Condon would have pressed these charges. In contrast, "most black people believed any attorney general would have prosecuted some longshoremen. . . . Similar things had happened before and would happen again" (89). I tend to agree with the latter opinion. Although Condon was bad, he was not unique. I also wonder whether the local police were really as cooperative and friendly as some dockworkers claimed. If they were so friendly, why did they send 660 riot-equipped officers to a peaceful picket line on the docks? It seems to me that some further work needs to be done to find those truly responsible for the police riot on that fateful day. I suspect when all the facts are known, we will see the hand of the company behind the provocation, not just the Port Authority. But that remains to be seen.

Finally, the men who were actually the Charleston Five remained almost unknown throughout the case. Erem and Durrenberger make it very clear; that was the decision of the lawyers defending the Five. Organizers of the national rally to free the Charleston Five were terribly disappointed. The attorneys did not let the Five attend the rally. Instead, huge cardboard figures, with their names, were propped up on the platform. Nor did the attorneys allow the Five to give interviews in their homes, not even on the telephone. They were truly just symbols, five dockworkers picked up almost at random. But they were five workers with families who suffered during twenty-two months of house arrest. Each had a story that he could have told. Fortunately, the movement was strong enough to win their freedom without the participation of the defendants. But progressive lawyers have over the years combined both avenues to victory. These lawyers handled

the legal arguments and allowed the defendants to help the movement win public support.

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Contrary Notions: The Michael Parenti Reader. By Michael Parenti. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2007. Paper \$18.95.

Michael Parenti's new book is a collection of essays on both historical topics and current events. In addition, he includes essays on issues related to class and power, continuing his work from previous books, especially his *Power and the Powerless*. All of the essays are written with passion and clarity. This type of clear and jargon-free prose is too rare an occurrence among most academicians, especially those on the Left. Parenti's style always has been clear and accessible, especially when compared to authors like Michel Foucault, who wrote on the same topic. Given Parenti's account of censorship in academia ("Repression in Academia" in *Contrary Notions*), and the fact that he is no longer affiliated with any institution of higher education, one can see why his clarity and passion are so rare.

Parenti's *Contrary Notions* contains sections on the media, political parties, political labels (left, right, liberal, and moderate), imperialism, the Cold War, and the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. His essays on international affairs also include sections on Venezuela and Iraq. Most of the book, however, is dedicated to domestic issues such as health care, racism, electoral politics ("Stolen Presidential Elections"), Katrina, and gay marriage ("Are Heterosexuals Worthy of Marriage?").

He sometimes makes the connection between domestic and international issues, particularly in "Custom Against Women," where he describes in detail, with numerous statistics, the brutality

and abuse that women are subjected to worldwide. This essay is an excellent example of Parenti's passion and moral clarity. He rejects any conception of cultural relativism and any excuse for violence against women that argues outsiders need to see "a society 'purely on its own terms'" (124). He points out that what is often portrayed as custom is really only the custom of a ruling elite that wants *carte blanche* to victimize the weaker members of their own societies. He states emphatically that universal laws of morality are applicable worldwide and should be enforced internationally (129). Unfortunately, he does not get into the details of how to do this.

Given his moral commitments, one would think that he would also be concerned about the problems of ethnic cleansing worldwide. Unfortunately his analysis of the breakup of Yugoslavia consists of defending Slobodan Milošević against NATO and "alleged war crimes" (298–99). This stand is consistent with his other essays defending the former Soviet Union and denouncing the West's aggression against the Communist bloc. He reminds us of the fact that the United States, along with thirteen other nations, invaded the Soviet Union right after the Russian Revolution and supported the White Guards that killed tens of thousands of people, including thousands from the Russian Jewish minority. This is important to remember, especially given the fact that this invasion is completely ignored in most textbooks and is unknown by most Americans, including two former presidents (Nixon and Reagan) who should have known better ("The Cold War is an Old War").

However, when it comes to the former Yugoslavia, moral clarity gives way to the same old Cold War rhetoric with a sector of the Left, including Parenti, reactively taking the other side. Just because the capitalist press ignores ethnic cleansing of allied and friendly nations and highlights that of its enemies whose resources it covets, does not mean that the Left should do the exact opposite. Serbs have the right to resist NATO and capitalist takeover of their resources and forced privatization. They have the right to choose their own government and economic system, including a Soviet-style Communist state. But Bosnians, Kosovans, and ethnic Albanians have the right to self-determination and to live without

the fear of racism or massacre. It is unfortunate that Parenti could not find it possible to reach such a conclusion.

Parenti ends his book with an inspiring affirmation of the people (“The People as ‘Rabble’ and ‘Mob’”), denouncing historiographic tendencies to characterize popular rebellions as mob violence. He does describe and denounce racist lynch-mob violence in the southern United States in an earlier essay (“Racism Then and Now”). His final sentences contain not a denunciation but an affirmation.

[W]hen the best pages of history are finally written, it will not be by princes, presidents, prime ministers, or pundits, nor even by professors, but by the people themselves. For all their faults and shortcomings, the people are all we have. Indeed, we ourselves are the people. (378)

If we really believe this, we must distinguish cases when “the people” engage in progressive rebellion against tyranny from cases when they act like lynch mobs. We need to understand why the former has not happened in recent times in the West, at least until now. In order to understand this we should consider not only forces of repression from without (the media, corporations, state violence) but also the forces of complacency and complicity within.

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Bush vs. Chávez: Washington’s War on Venezuela. By Eva Golinger. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2007. 175 pages, cloth \$50; paper \$15.95.

Can “foreign aid” threaten the democratic practices it claims to promote? Generally positively regarded, foreign aid has come to symbolize a means towards the defense of human rights and democratic practices. In *Bush vs. Chávez: Washington’s War on*

Venezuela, Golinger reminds us that we cannot separate foreign aid institutions (noble as their mottos may be) from the geopolitical interests of donor nations.

A Venezuelan-American attorney, Eva Golinger first tackled U.S. involvement in Venezuela in 2005 when she published *The Chavez Code*. Based on documents she secured through extensive FOIA requests, *The Chavez Code* exposed the degree of U.S. Intervention in Venezuela. The book's subtitle, *Cracking U.S. Intervention in Venezuela*, is perhaps a more fitting description of her work. Golinger analyzed formerly classified documents that retold the story of the conflict as one between Hugo Chávez and his opposition bolstered by the United States. *The Chavez Code* painstakingly detailed U.S. funding to Venezuelan opposition groups and described events and actors relatively unknown outside of Venezuela. Golinger's richly detailed account nevertheless failed to convey the importance of these actions for U.S. foreign policy.

This oversight is righted in *Bush vs. Chavez: Washington's War on Venezuela*. Golinger not only narrates the conflict from 1998 to 2006, she explains the importance of Venezuela to U.S. foreign policy and the threat that Chávez poses to U.S. hegemony in Latin America. Hugo Chávez's Bolivarian Revolution has, in the words of retired U.S. Army colonel Max G. Manwaring, ignited a "super insurgency" in the region that no longer "looks north" as a priority (113, 154). In *Bush vs. Chávez*, Golinger successfully relocates the story of Chávez and his opposition from the sphere of national politics in Venezuela to the sphere of U.S. foreign policy.

In *Bush vs Chavez*, Golinger grounds her argument in the history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and concludes that Washington's treatment of Venezuela has followed the U.S. model of so-called "democratic intervention" (15). Golinger convincingly argues the United States has packaged an aggressive interventionist approach as "democratic promotion" by funding opposition groups, using the media to discredit regimes hostile to its interests, and taking steps to isolate these regimes from the international community.

Weaving a startling tale of déjà vu, Golinger likens key events in the Venezuelan conflict to the coup against Salvador Allende

in Chile, the international isolation of Cuba championed by the United States, the electoral defeat of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, and the overthrow of Jean Bertrand Aristide of Haiti. Taking a tough stance on Venezuela by categorizing Chávez's government as a destabilizing force in the region, the Bush administration recruited foreign-policy officials, such as John Negroponte, Otto Reich, and Charles Shapiro, whose experience in Latin America was acquired in the context of Cold War politics. Predictably, this resulted in the reinstatement of the covert interventionist policies of the 70s and 80s in the region.

Drawing from official U.S. documents, Golinger demonstrates the funneling of millions of dollars to Venezuelan opposition groups bent on ousting Chávez from power through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Office of Transition (OTI)—organizations claiming to promote freedom and humanitarian assistance throughout the world. But Golinger fails to explain how organizations such as the NED, USAID, and OTI have come to assume such an important role in U.S. foreign policy.

Instead of explaining the connections between organizations such as the NED and the Bush administration, Golinger presents the antidemocratic tendencies of the NED as a reflection of the personal convictions of its president Carl Gershman. Readers are left to assume that Gershman shares the Bush administration's dislike of Chávez. Golinger offers no specifics on how organizations such as the NED are funded, how they collect information, what organizations they meet with, how they determine which foreign groups are "democratic" and merit funding, or the extent of the relationship between the NED and the office of the president.

The U.S. government's involvement in Venezuela continues. In the wake of failed attempts to remove Chavez from power, "democratic intervention" has been followed by an asymmetric "war" on Venezuela. Golinger argues that the United States has engaged in a "low-intensity" conflict marked by a U.S. troop buildup in the Caribbean, military exercises to defend U.S. interests from "anti-Western guerrilla groups" aligned with Colombia's FARC and

ELN, and the creation of “satellite consulates” in impoverished neighborhoods across the country aimed at undermining Chávez’s popular support.

In *Bush vs. Chávez*, Golinger leaves no doubt the United States has an interest in deposing Hugo Chávez and containing his influence in Latin America. His model of “participatory democracy” and twenty-first century socialism threatens Fukuyama’s “end of history” with nation-states following the U.S. model of representative democracy and free-market capitalist economics. According to Golinger, the United States has responded to this threat by funding groups more in tune to its interests.

Golinger asks her readers to consider the question, “What is wrong with receiving financing from the U.S. government through NED, USAID and OTI?” (78). For U.S. citizens, who have been told to “pay no attention to the man behind the curtain,” it is clear the foreign aid we give other countries corresponds to the political interests of the administration in power and not necessarily to democratic initiatives.

Ultimately, Golinger raises more questions than she answers. Overlooking the operational intricacies of organizations such as the NED, USAID, and OTI, she strips her readers of the power to “pull back the curtain,” leaving us to ponder under what circumstances can “foreign aid” promote democracy or be used for humanitarian assistance.

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ABSTRACTS

William Mello, “*Dockers News: The Struggle for Union Democracy in the Port of New York, 1949–1986*”—A rank-and-file reform movement emerged in the Port of New York in 1947 and continued well into the 1980s. *Dockers News* was organized by Communist longshoremen and continuously made its presence known in the form of a newsletter, mobilizing longshoremen to challenge the corrupt International Longshoremen’s Association leadership. The struggle for control of the docks illustrates the mounting systemic political constraints placed on organized labor after the war, and was a harbinger of what other sectors of the American working class would soon experience.

Joel Wendland, “Orientalism and the U.S. Empire: A Reading of Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive*”— Encounters with the Islamic world date back to the beginning of the United States. Early cultural producers imagined what such encounters meant, relating them principally to U.S. domestic life and the quest for an imagined community and social harmony deployed in the service of bourgeois interests, not unlike today. An important example is Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive* (1797). The author excavates the discourse of race, empire, and civilization in Tyler’s novel and dialectically links it to the culture of resistance produced by those “others” Tyler sought to exclude from the civilized community.

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ABREGES

Mello, William, « *Dockers News : la lutte pour la démocratie au sein du syndicat au Port de New York, 1949–1986* » — Un mouvement à la base pour reformes surgit au Port de New York

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en 1947, et continua au delà des années 1980. Dockers News, organisé par les débardeurs du Parti Communiste des Etats-Unis, se manifestait en permanence par un bulletin régulier, mobilisant les débardeurs à défier la direction corrompue de l'Association Internationale des Débardeurs. La lutte pour le contrôle des docks illustre les contraintes politiques systémiques de plus en plus importantes, qui pesaient sur les forces de travail organisées après la guerre, et qui préfiguraient ce que d'autres secteurs de la classe ouvrière américaine allaient bientôt éprouver.

Joel Wendland, « L'orientalisme et l'empire états-unien : une lecture de *The Algerine Captive* de Royall Tyler » — Des rencontres avec le monde islamique ont existées depuis le début des Etats-Unis. Les premiers producteurs culturels imaginaient la signification de telles rencontres, en les rapprochant principalement à la vie domestique aux Etats-Unis, et à la quête pour une communauté imaginaire et une harmonie sociale, déployée au service d'intérêts bourgeois, pas autrement qu'aujourd'hui. Un exemple important est *The Algerine Captive* (1797) de Royall Tyler. L'auteur déterre dans le roman de Tyler le discours à propos de la race, de l'empire et de la civilisation, et le lie d'une façon dialectique à la culture de résistance produite par ces « autres », que Tyler cherchait à exclure de la communauté civilisée.