

# *From the Left*

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## **WHAT'S "LEFT" IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT?**

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There are many people analyzing the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict who do so with little apparent understanding of the class basis for this conflict and its linkages to imperialism. Their analyses operate within the confines of nationalist interpretations. This approach not only limits their ability to see the conflict's regional context and economic roots, but it also obscures these roots behind self-justifying ethnic and religious claims. What follows is a description and analysis of some movements regarded as "progressive" - the Palestinian Left and the Israeli Peace Movement -- but which have replaced class analysis and class conflict with nationalism and religion as analytic and organizational tools.

**1. Factionalized Nationalist Movements:** Both sides, the Israelis and the Palestinians, have heavily factionalized nationalist movements linked in the past and present to outside imperialist powers. Furthermore, the progressive portions of both nationalist movements are nearly extinguished. What passes for the "Left" among Israelis and Palestinians is largely bourgeois liberalism in the form of advocacy for a two-state solution based on interrelated market economies. Both states (continued on p. 9)

## **NO RIGHT ANSWERS**

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The horrific attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. bombing and invasion of Afghanistan, and the collapse into violence of peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis has had a dramatic effect across the political spectrum, including right-wing social and political movements in the United States. The range of responses on the Right varied greatly, even within specific sectors. Support for Bush's war on terror and the attack on Afghanistan exist as independent variables to Bush's moves to erode civil liberties. Libertarians tended to oppose them all. Neoconservatives (and liberals) tended to support them all. Every combination could be found.

One way to make sense of this is to recognize that the Christian Right, the Patriot movement and the militias, and the Extreme Right are three different movements that exist to the right of traditional conservatism and the center of the Republican Party. Kathleen Blee stresses that all these groups can be dangerous, but that their differences are substantial. Betty Dobratz observes, "these movements remain fairly distinct, and although there are attempts to bridge these movements, they are mostly not successful." John C. Green argues "the Christian Right had some militants that leaned toward the militias, and some militias were composed mainly of Christian evangelicals. But for the most part, the Christian Right took a dim view of the militias." Mark Pitcavage says, "For the militias and the Patriot (continued on p. 5)

## GLOBAL MARXISM

### The Future of the Third World, Part I: The U.S. and the Recent Events in Venezuela

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*With this essay it looks as if "Global Marxism," introduced in the last Newsletter, is now an institution of sorts. This column is an attempt to take the world, especially the Third World, as the subject of Marxism. "Subject" both in the sense of what Marxism as an approach could be about, and in the sense of centering the agency of people in the Third World. I invite your feedback, either on the pieces that appear here, or on your ideas for an essay of your own that might fit this rubric. foran@soc.ucsb.edu*

Are democratic revolutionaries and counter-systemic movements harder to overthrow than in the past, despite the fact that the U.S. has no challenger for world hegemony? The recent startling events in Venezuela suggest this may be so. In February, managers at the state oil company began a slowdown to protest President Hugo Chávez's appointment of five of his allies to the board of directors. Over the next two months, the anti-Chávez opposition came to include "labour groups, business leaders, the national media and the Catholic church.... According to members of the military, a handful of senior officials had been planning Mr. Chávez's removal for about six months."<sup>1</sup>

On Thursday, April 11, the country's largest business *and* labor groups called for a national strike in support of the managers

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes and facts are taken from two sources -- the British *Guardian Weekly*, as this one is, and the *New York Times*; I thank Becca Wanner for finding the NYT coverage for me.

of the national oil company, broadcast repeatedly by the national media. Hundreds of thousands turned out. The call was for President Hugo Chávez to step down. Late in the day Chávez pulled private television stations opposed to the government off the air. Shooting broke out. "A stream of high-ranking military officials withdrew their support for the government." Holding him in five different locations, including La Orchila island, they said that Chávez had resigned and asked to be flown to Cuba -- he later denied resigning. The military endorsed Pedro Carmona, head of one of the business groups in the strike, as interim president.

The provisional government moved quickly to dissolve the National Assembly and the supreme court, as well as the 1999 constitution, passed by a large majority; it did not set a precise date for elections, saying only that they would be held within a year. Nor did it include in its new government a single member of the labor opposition, or the leftist parties opposed to Chávez. Instead, it set out to "hunt down" Chávez supporters. After it passed over General Efraim Vasquez Velasco for defense minister, one of the key coup makers, warned Carmona that he would withdraw support unless the Assembly was restored. When the National Guard (and apparently, the U.S. -- see below) joined in this demand, Carmona backed down on it. As Carmona lost the support of some of the officers who had made the coup, which began to be perceived as "a business elite coup," pro-Chávez forces at a military base in Maracay started an insurrection to restore him. Military officers asked for Carmona to resign on Saturday evening, then released Chávez a few hours later to resume the presidency.

What were the origins of this startling sequence of events? Let's start with the political economic basis: Venezuela is the world's fourth largest oil exporter and the third largest supplier of oil to the U.S. The day Chávez left office, oil prices fell six percent on the world market, in expectation that Venezuela would return to above quota

production, as it had done before Chávez brought it back into line with OPEC policy. Chávez also met quite publicly with Muammar al-Qaddafi and Saddam Hussein, not to mention non-oil exporter Fidel Castro, to whom he sent oil, and the Colombian guerrillas, to whom he gave support. He had moved to bring about land reform, gain control of the state oil company's policy, expose elite corruption, and rewrite the constitution – all moves which he saw as part of a popular, legal “democratic revolution” on behalf of the 85 percent of the population that lives in poverty. The exact nature of this regime is far more complex than I can indicate here; as Gabriel García Márquez put it, Chávez appears to be two different men: “One to whom the caprices of fate had given an opportunity to save his country; the other, an illusionist who could pass into the history books as just another despot.”<sup>2</sup>

This raises the question: what role did the U.S. play? We know that the National Endowment for Democracy, a non-profit organization founded and funded by Congress, saw its allocation to Venezuela-based projects quadruple last year to \$877,000; it funded the AFL-CIO's international arm to work with the Venezuelan labor confederation that led the protests against Chávez, as well as the foreign policy wings of the Democratic and Republican parties, which brought Venezuelan oppositionists to Washington and assisted their parties and press organs in Venezuela. We also know that the chief Latin American policy maker for the Bush administration is Otto Reich, a hard-line Cuban exile and former ambassador to Venezuela who was involved in covert propaganda for the Contras in Nicaragua.

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Marc Cooper, “The Coup That Wasn't,” *The Nation*, 5/6; for extensive analysis, see Richard Gott, *In the Shadow of the Liberator: The Impact of Hugo Chávez on Venezuela and Latin America* (London: Verso, 2001).

The State Department first said that Reich made contact with Carmona during the coup, offering advice, then “corrected” the record to say Reich had merely instructed the current ambassador, Charles Shapiro, to do so. After the coup failed, it was agreed that they had advised him to respect the constitution, but the speed of the contact and nature of the advice suggest support for Carmona's take-over and a desire that it succeed. U.S. elite thinking is further revealed in the remark of David J. Rothkopf, chairman of Intellibridge, a consulting firm of former senior intelligence and foreign policy officials: “The only cure [for Venezuela's periodic crises] would be to extract all the oil from Venezuela at once” (NYT 4/14).

More contradictory accounts have emerged about the role of the Bush administration in the months leading up to the coup. A Defense Department official said: “We were not discouraging people. We were sending informal, subtle signals that we don't like this guy [Chávez]. We didn't say, ‘No, don't you dare,’ and we weren't advocates saying, ‘Here's some arms; we'll help you overthrow this guy’” (NYT, 4/16). There were also meetings between the Pentagon and the chief of the Venezuelan military. The pattern of contact implies that the U.S. was indeed seeking the ouster of Chávez, if at all possible by means other than an overt coup – a referendum, impeachment, or, as it turned out, a carefully orchestrated mass demonstration that might force his “resignation” while maintaining the appearance of respect for the constitution -- hence the Reich/Shapiro concerns. The day of the coup, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer placed clear blame on Chávez himself: “The actions encouraged by the Chávez government provoked a crisis” (NYT 4/14). The *New York Times* editorialized: “With yesterday's resignation of President Hugo Chávez, Venezuelan democracy is no longer threatened by a would-be dictator” (4/13), stating that Carmona “could not be more different from Mr. Chávez” in his non-aspiration for power, his hard work, steadfastness, and unique

ability to find “compromises and solutions that everyone can live with” (in its 4/12 news report). The Associated Press considered the potential return to power of the deposed president “unfortunate,” especially with respect to oil prices.

How was Chávez returned to power? It appears a combination of international pressure (which the U.S. did not – or could not -- block or control), and popular support (which the U.S. could manipulate only up to a certain point) led to his miraculous overcoming of the coup. The first was made more effective by the democratic origins of the Chávez regime, and the undemocratic actions of the opposition. World reaction to the coup ran against the U.S. interpretation of events; nineteen Latin American leaders at the Organization of American States quickly condemned the “alteration of the constitutional order in Venezuela” and invoked the new Democratic Charter they had passed last year to isolate, by non-recognition and sanctions, governments that come to power non-democratically. An OAS diplomat said of the emergency meeting: “We were in that room for 14 hours, and for most of that 14 hours [U.S. ambassador to the OAS Roger] Noriega was pushing the line that it was Chávez who had created the problem” (*Guardian*, 4/25-5/1). The U.S. joined the OAS condemnation only *after* learning of Chávez’s restoration.

What are the lessons of the events? On this, opinions will vary. The White House issued the following statement after it was over: “The people of Venezuela have sent a clear message to President Chávez that they want both democracy and reform.” Chávez’s speeches and actions after the coup were uncharacteristically conciliatory, pledging a process of national consultation on the deep social polarization that has beset the country. He reversed his management decisions at the state oil company, and enjoined the political opposition and the media to “Engage in politics that are fair, just and legal.” He added “What I feel is a people full of love. This is one of the biggest days in history.”

Marc Cooper wrote, with characteristic astuteness, in *The Nation*: “no one should confuse Hugo Chávez with Salvador Allende... Now is the time for Chávez to talk a whole lot less and do a whole lot more” (5/6).

The larger lessons are consonant with the thesis advanced at the outset that democratic revolutionaries may be harder to overthrow than in the past. The end of the cold war may in fact have opened up opportunities for revolutionaries to operate, precisely because the countries in question can no longer be treated as pawns in a larger geo-political struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. Democratic revolutionaries and non-violent movements in particular may find new spaces in which to maneuver. No longer (or not yet) certain of the bases of its global political-economic strategic vision, the U.S. may also be loath to intervene in conflicts in certain parts of the Third World, at least with overwhelming military force.

Even after the events of September 11, 2001, this logic still seems accurate to me, since the Taliban does not fill the requirements of being democratic, non-violent, or revolutionary. The same applies to the next target, Saddam Hussein, and sadly, is being applied to the Palestinian movement by the Bush administration, illustrating the danger that in the new counter-revolutionary discourse of U.S. power, the term “terrorist” will be substituted for the old “communist”, and aimed at the real targets -- national (and now global) revolutionaries.

Senator Tom Daschle, Democratic majority leader, said after the events in Venezuela: “I’m very concerned about what message it sends about our support for democracy there and around the world. I think that we’ve got to be supportive of democratic principles even when they choose to elect people we don’t like” (NYT 4/17; note the eerie reversal of the infamous Kissinger quote about Chile in 1970: “I don’t see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people”).

Meanwhile, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee plans an investigation of U.S. government, military, and business connections with the coup-makers in Venezuela. Like much of the backtracking Bush administration, the *New York Times* also quickly rewrote history after the coup failed: "Forcibly unseating a democratically elected leader, no matter how bad he may be, is never something to cheer."

Of course, I may well be wrong to discern openings here. The Bush-Cheney administration with realpolitiker Condoleezza Rice as national security advisor and throwback cold warrior Donald Rumsfeld as secretary of defense, and only Colin Powell as secretary of state to moderate them, surely *wishes* to be more aggressive militarily, but will it carry the needed weight, locally or internationally, to successfully target democratic, nonviolent challengers to the global logic of economic injustice? The revolutionaries of the near-term future themselves may soon enough provide clues to the answer; my point is that their actions will surely influence the degree and type of interventions they face.

While life is long, and a single victory does not mean the winning of the struggle, revolutionaries should take heart from this outcome. The future, if it is to be different from the past, will require a global movement of opposition to the continuation of U.S. counterrevolutionary foreign policy, to force a deepening of respect for the principle that democratic and non-violent movements may not be overthrown.

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**(Berlet cont. from p. 1)** Movement the primary focus is antigovernment. For the right-wing hate groups the primary focus is intolerance. These are not mutually exclusive ideas and people can shift, but still they are basically different perspectives." The importance of analyzing these differences is the central theme of Martin Durham's book *The Christian Right, the Far Right and the Boundaries of American Conservatism*, (Manchester,

England: Manchester University Press, 2000).

The Extreme Right response to the cascading crises starting in late 2001 were predictable- the typical neofascist scapegoating of Jews, although in this situation, the bigotry was embedded in criticism of Zionism. A.V. Schaerffenberg, writing in a national socialist publication, blamed the attacks on the "government's blind support of Israel...When New York's World Trade Center crumbled before the eyes of all mankind, not only did the Jew money-power's chief headquarters collapse. So did its most visible symbol of world domination." White supremacist David Duke wrote several articles that made similar arguments, but used such careful language that in a few cases his words were posted on left and pro-Arab lists before being denounced by other participants. In an open attempt to reach out to the left, Duke wrote: "For many years I, along with Patrick Buchanan, Ramsey Clark, and a few other political untouchables, have tried to prevent this kind of tragedy. We have warned against recklessly involving America in the many wars and blood feuds around the world."

On a website of the Extreme Right Posse Comitatus, the writer went further: "If, as a Christian Republic, we want to put an end to so-called terrorism on the soil of this nation we must expel ALL jews and non-whites from OUR Promised Land, this New JerUSAlem, call all of our armed forces from around the world back home, END our support of the TERRORIST State of Israeli, CLOSE our borders, all Praise to our Father and mind no one else's business other than that of our own nation."

Within the hard right, Patriot and Militia groups were divided between support for the government in a time of crisis, and blaming the government for engineering the attacks as part of a conspiracy to impose tyranny. Carl Worden of Southern Oregon Militia wrote: "I am no fan of our current government" [but now is] not the time to promulgate propaganda intended to divide our people. If we are to win against this

vicious aggressor, we must all pull together....Anyone who attempts to use this crisis as an opportunity to destroy us from within... is a traitor, and is no patriot."

The John Birch Society took a similar approach but stressed civil liberties. William Norman Grigg wrote, "The gravest long-term danger presented by the horrific events of September 11th is that the effort to find and punish perpetrators will become a war on the liberties of the American people. The destruction of political freedom, in fact, is precisely the aim of terrorist revolutionaries and those who support them." Gary Benoit wove in anticommunist version of antiglobalism: "The anti-terrorism coalition is being organized under the aegis of the United Nations. In addition to China and Russia, other state sponsors of terrorism we are now aligning ourselves with in the fight against terrorism include Pakistan, Iran, and Syria.... Russian Communism not only spawned the international terrorist network but continues to provide it with vital support today."

Other Hard Right groups took a harder line or focused on Israel. Jared Taylor of the White racial nationalist American Renaissance asked, "Why have we so obviously chosen sides in a bitter, decades-long fight in the Middle East? Is Israel so clearly in the right that we should risk the hatred of half the world in order to support it? Dr Michael Hill, president of the neoconfederate League of the South sought punishment for the attackers, but added a right-wing populist version of anti-imperialism: "since the War Between the States, America has become an empire with its tentacles- both military and financial-squeezing the entire globe? The U.S. Establishment elite has committed itself to a thoroughgoing reconstruction of the world in its own image."

This theme echoed ideas from libertarian writers such as Harry Browne who asked, "When will we learn that we can't allow our politicians to bully the world without someone bullying back eventually?" Justin Raimondo of Antiwar.com who wrote, "We have pledged to go after the

perpetrators or those who gave them safe harbor, and the usual parade of laptop bombardiers has declared 'war' on 'the enemy.' But who or what is the enemy? And, most of all, where are they?" He concluded, "the only way we can 'win' such a battle is to lose the very values that we want to defend in the first place."

In terms of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Leon Hadar, an adjunct scholar at the libertarian Cato Institute, suggested "Instead of trying to micromanage the Arab-Israeli peace process, the United States should minimize its financial commitment to Israel and the emerging Palestinian entity and encourage economic cooperation between Israel and the Arab states, which could be the foundation for an interdependent Middle Eastern economy."

Most mainstream conservatives supported the attack on Afghanistan and applauded the Administration's increased use of surveillance and detention. As early as 1995, James Phillips, a Senior Policy Analyst at the Heritage Foundation, had urged Clinton to "Maximize pressure on Arafat to crack down on terrorism." No surprise that Phillips in April 2002 suggested to the Bush Administration, "It's time for the United States to abandon the wishful thinking that has allowed Arafat to continue his double game. It should encourage Israel to expel Arafat and shun him in exile." Meanwhile Heritage analyst Ariel Cohen claimed that "Arafat invented the Jenin 'massacre,' and that:

"Arafat needs the world to ignore the mountains of documented evidence connecting him beyond reasonable doubt with the terror campaigns of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Tanzim and Al Aqsa. He needs the U.S. government and the Western media to shut their eyes to his close links with Iran and Iraq. He needs them to overlook where the real massacres are taking place: in Netanya, Haifa and Jerusalem."

In the ultraconservative Business Nationalist sector, Pat Buchanan staked out a different position marked by xenophobia and right-wing anti-imperialism. According

to Buchanan, "the mass murder of our citizens has filled this country with a terrible resolve that could lead it to plunge headlong into an all-out war against despised Arab and Islamic regimes that turns into a war of civilizations, with the United States almost alone....There is no vital American interest at risk in all these religious, territorial and tribal wars from Algeria to Afghanistan. Let us pay back those who did this, then let us extricate ourselves. Either America finds an exit strategy from empire, or we lose our republic."

Buchanan warned that bombing Afghanistan would only create more terrorists and that "if the president cannot change the perception that he cannot stand up to Sharon and bring him around to negotiate with the Palestinians, we may be headed for an oil boycott, expulsion of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia and a strategic disaster in the war on terror." Buchanan's xenophobia was naked:

"Progressives may deplore the immigration quotas from the Coolidge to the Kennedy eras, but not one act of terrorism occurred on U.S. soil in those years....America has now completed a third of a century with massive immigration, and Sept. 11 should be a final warning that open borders represent an intolerable threat to the national security. We are only just beginning to see the dark side of diversity. Western peoples must begin to ask themselves questions our ruling class has kept off the table too long: Are there not some peoples, from radically different countries and cultures, who are far more difficult to assimilate in Western societies than others?...Ridge should...begin the systematic deportation of illegal aliens...from nations that harbor terrorists, any who consort with or fund terrorist organizations and any who applauded the horrors of Sept. 11. When rounded up, these folks should hear just five words, "Get out of our country!"

There were a number of other ultra conservatives that used the crises to promote anti-immigrant xenophobia. An

example was Phyllis Schlafly, founder of the anti-ERA Eagle Forum, who charged:

"The terrorists are foreigners, most or all of whom should never have been in our country, and they have sophisticated techniques with which to manifest their hatred. The policy of opening our borders to anyone who wants to sneak into our country illegally must be exposed and terminated....Let's bring back the House Committee on Un-American Activities. We need congressional watchdogs to close the cracks in our internal security."

Daniel Pipes, Director of the Middle East Forum, and his ally Steven Emerson were accused of bigoted stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims in their assessment of terrorist threats. Columnists John Podhoretz and Martin Peretz described a "fifth column" composed primarily of Middle Easterners. Bigotry was also evident in anti-immigrant groups such as VDARE, named after "Virginia Dare, the first English child to be born in the New World." More vividly White supremacist xenophobic rhetoric could be found in White racial nationalist groups and the Extreme Right.

Sara Diamond described this type of tactical parallel organizing as "projects," since the various groups maintained distinct organizational boundaries and did not form strategic coalitions, yet were working toward common goals.

Another example of this type of project was that concern over political repression could be found in various sectors of the right. Libertarians followed their core principles, but other defenders of civil liberties included the Patriot movement, the Extreme Right, and even some conservatives.

Libertarian Raimondo listed the offenses of the Bush administration after 9/11: "the establishment of military tribunals to usurp the function of our civilian courts; the passage of the Orwellian 'USA PATRIOT Act,' which legalizes widespread surveillance of legal political and religious organizations (as well as individuals) and lays the groundwork for a national identity card; the detention of hundreds, who are

jailed in secrecy, on secret charges, at the whim of the Attorney General. This man is the harbinger of the American Counterrevolution: the liberties the patriots of 1776 fought and died to establish are being systematically disestablished by John Ashcroft, a Torquemada for our times."

Paul Weyrich, president of the Free Congress Foundation pleaded with Congress to think carefully before enacting repressive laws:

"We reaffirm the importance of a vigorous anti-terrorist posture by the federal government and the most severe penalties possible for those guilty of such unspeakable atrocities. This is not the time for knee-jerk appeals to civil liberties -- but neither is it the time to rush headlong into an expansion of the surveillance state and abridge the Constitutionally-protected rights of US citizens...."

"Necessary adjustments to the law in the fight against terrorism are applauded by all. But an expanding of the police state and curtailing the Constitutional rights of Americans just eats away at who and what we are. Tearing down America and her Constitution would only give the anti-Americans another victory in addition to the carnage they have already wreaked. Please don't give the terrorists that victory."

Most leaders in the Christian Right, however, were less concerned with domestic civil liberties than with the prophetic role of Israel in the End Times. Many conservative Protestant evangelicals support Israel because according to Biblical prophecy, Christ will not return for his second act unless Jews are in control of the Holy Land and have rebuilt the Temple of Solomon on the site of what is currently a significant Mosque. From this perspective, the terror attacks were God's punishment for sinfulness in the U.S. The Operation Save America website coldly opined, "The fact that airplanes are smashing into buildings by terrorists is not our problem. It is a sign and judgment from God....Let's face it. We have mercilessly killed over 45 million little baby boys and girls [through abortion]. We have thrown God out of

school, banished Him from the schoolyard, and ripped His Ten Commandments from the walls. We have called what is evil good and what is good evil."

The Midnight Call ministries website explained the Mideast conflicts thusly: "The Old Testament book of Zechariah contains a prophecy that Jerusalem will become '*a burdensome stone for all people.*' Bible prophecy comes alive when we witness all that is going on around the world and how much of it revolves around the city of Jerusalem. But the Bible also says that God will vindicate the Jews and that all who '*burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces.*'" Elsewhere on the site, Norbert Lieth predicted, "The Lord will achieve His goal with Israel and with His Church. The gates of hell will not prevail against them, for the rulers of this world will pass away, but Jesus Christ is coming!"

The World Net Daily website is a fusion of Christian Right and Patriot ideology and it carried articles on the Mideast from evangelical leaders Rev. Jerry Falwell and Alan Keyes along with its own Joseph Farah.

Falwell claimed "Every Evangelical Christian who loves Israel is celebrating the victory of Ariel Sharon as that nation's new prime minister. By a landslide margin, Mr. Sharon defeated Ehud Barak and immediately set in motion a plan to prevent the fulfillment of Mr. Barak's earlier misguided concessions to the Palestinians."

Alan Keyes urged "Today more than ever, America must stand with Israel particularly on the ground of our common opposition to the terrorist menace which threatens the independence, the morality, and the decent conscience not just of Israelis, but of every human being on the globe."

Joseph Farah wrote a column titled "Free Palestine," but then revealed the catch: "I, too, would love to free Palestine. Specifically I would like to free it from its association with the terrorist dictator Yasser Arafat. I would like to free all Arabs from the tyranny under which they live everywhere except Israel, [some people]...obviously

think Arabs would be freer under the leadership of Arafat than they have been under Israeli rule." Farah is an evangelical Christian with a Syrian and Lebanese heritage who frequently presents himself as a pro-Israel Arab-American.

Widespread conspiracism has afflicted some debates over 9/11 and the crises in the Middle East. Some of these theories are from the political right; others claim to be from the left, others represent a fusion of left and right viewpoints. A common generic conspiracy theory suggested that the failure of the U.S. government to scramble jet interceptor aircraft in time to shoot down the hijacked planes was somehow evidence that the government was aware of the attack and did nothing to stop it; or that the government itself staged the attack to justify aggressive militarism and domestic repression. One theory claimed that remote control devices flew the planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Another claimed that all the buildings were actually destroyed by bombs hidden inside the structures, and one variation asserted that no plane hit the Pentagon at all. Progressive analysts David Corn, Norman Solomon, and Bill Weinberg have led a progressive challenge to this type of conspiracism.

Given that there are clearly several issues where right-wing and left-wing rhetoric appears to coincide, it is imperative that progressive sociologists help left activists make clear the different solutions for these problems articulated by the left. Three tasks stand out:

- 1) Encouraging some type of dialectical materialism or power structure research versus rampant conspiracism;
- 2) Delineating the difference between calls for Palestinian rights versus historic antisemitic stereotyping; and,
- 3) Differentiating between progressive internationalism versus xenophobic right-wing nationalism as solutions for imperial marauding and transnational corporate greed.

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A version of this article with footnotes and active hyperlinks will be posted at:

<http://www.publiceye.org/frontpage/911/reactions.html>

**(Platkin and O'Connell, cont. from p. 1)**

would be bourgeois democracies, in which production and investment would remain largely in private hands, not subject to public discussion, debate, or control. The two states would continue to be heavily linked to outside investors and their political and military agents. In neither case would the state be subject to the authority of the workforce.

**2. Disintegration of the Palestinian Left:**

The Palestinian opposition to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, in the form of the second Intifada, is, in essence, opposition from the political right. This is despite frequent slogans at support rallies with an anti-imperialist or anti-colonialist ring to them, such as "Free, Free Palestine." These rallies, as well as their agitational material, are careful to exclude any political and economic dimensions of Palestinian freedom, such as political or economic democracy, from their podiums, flyers, newspapers, and Internet sites.

The remnants of the formerly left Palestinian groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) have no discernable political practices for analyzing or changing class relations within Palestinian society, Israel, or in the region. They are not even focused on finding points of unity between the Palestinian and Israeli working classes, an obvious early step in class struggle, nor with the working classes of other countries in the region, such as Jordan, Lebanon, or Egypt.

Furthermore, within Palestinian society these remnants of the Palestinian left do not appear to engage in class analysis or class struggle, except for ambiguous references on web pages. Other than a militant Palestinian teachers' strike a few years ago, it is difficult to find active class politics in Palestinian society, unless it functions on a clandestine level. At this point, their nationalist outlook is largely separatist and hard to distinguish from the views of the two Islamic movements active in Gaza and the West Bank: Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Their ideologies combine conservative religion, nationalism, and - - if recent press reports are correct - - an anti-Jewishness which far surpasses any narrow opposition to Zionism or Israeli state policies. Furthermore, these nationalist viewpoints have morphed into racism. The once left organizations now condone (and sometimes initiate) terrorist attacks against Israeli Jewish civilians, regardless of their victims' military role, class position, or political views. Workers, kids, and the elderly are legitimate targets. We also make a comparable analysis of much of the Israeli "Left" below. It, too, is nationalistic, and it has few, if any, links with either Jewish or Palestinian workers. And while the Israeli working class has been historically active through the Histadrut Labor Federation, its activism is strictly focused on wages and benefits, without any criticism of Israeli government policies towards the Palestinians or its cooperation with the United States military, apartheid South Africa, or the Central American contras.

**3. Repression in Israel and the Palestinian Authority:** The Israeli left and peace movements function within the context of Israeli society, which has veered sharply to the right since the beginning of the second intifada. At this point the Israeli government and much of the Israeli population is profoundly racist, with clear fascist tendencies, but not yet completely fascist. Within Israel's 1948-67 boundaries (i.e, the Green Line) the country still has a bourgeois democracy with more parties, newspapers, debates, and higher electoral

turnouts among both Jews and Arabs than in the United States. Furthermore, even though there is intricate discrimination against Israeli Arab Palestinians, they, too, have the trappings of bourgeois democracy, with multiple parties, elections, newspapers, and trade union membership.

Within the West Bank and Gaza, however, there is no doubt about fascism -- that is, severe political repression combining physical attacks and prohibitions on political activity -- enforced by both the Israeli military and the Palestinian Authority (PA). This fascism, once characterized by death squads and checkpoints, has now escalated into full-scale military invasions. It has been instigated by the Israeli occupation forces, but with no shortage of prior collusion from the Palestinian Authority, with its dozen police agencies, many established by the CIA and Mossad. They are hard at work to keep tight political control, and in early June 2002 CIA Director George Tenet made still another visit to the Palestinian Authority's areas of control. If the PA has not succeeded in implementing the Mossad's and CIA's goals of total political passivity, it is largely a result of incompetence, internal Palestinian political struggles, and the Israeli government's economic sanctions against the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, many rounds of Israeli military action against the Palestinian Authority have ironically targeted the very police agencies charged with apprehending anti-Israel militants, as well as the civil structures fostered by the European Union.

**4. The Israeli Peace Movement:** The Israeli Jewish public, for the most part, is highly nationalistic and thus subject to the racism which characterizes all nationalist movements. Their arrogance towards the Palestinians is so widespread that most Israeli liberals are unaware of their own racist assumptions about the conflict. In fact, many of them are still dazed by the Palestinian Authority's rejection of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's "most generous offer yet" (for several Bantustans!) that they support the repressive policies of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Their

"liberal" racism primarily takes the form of separatism, not yet the ethnic cleansing or "transfer" programs openly advocated by the Israeli right, including some current Cabinet members. This drastic, pre-genocidal approach is, however, supported by about 15 percent of Israel's Jewish population. It is also reported by the press to be waiting for the right political events to unfold, such as a regional war beginning with another U.S. attack on Iraq or an India-Pakistan nuclear exchange.

In contrast, most of the Israeli peace movement, which opposes everything from settlements in the occupied territories to torture of Palestinians, wants a two state solution in which Israeli Jews and most Palestinians will lead wholly separate lives. In some cases they even advocate the construction of an impregnable security wall between the two states. These programs, in which ethnic segregation/separation is paramount, is unfortunately, considered "progressive" in most quarters, even though such segregation and separation are defining features of racism. Another source of the Israeli peace movement is the tremendous resentment among many liberal Israelis to three years of mandatory military service in the IDF, an army whose main role now is to defend the two percent of the Israeli population who are settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In fact, this resentment has given rise to the new "Refusenik" movement. It consists of approximately 1000 Israeli reservists and active duty soldiers who refuse to serve in the West Bank or in Gaza. It has added a level of critical civil obedience to the Israeli peace movement which could ultimately make a military difference if it grows.

A more implicitly progressive component is those on each side who are willing to cross ethnic boundaries. There are a number of groups which function at the grass-roots level, bringing together Palestinians and Israelis, Muslims and Jews. They are not revolutionary in the sense of advocating a socialized and democratic economy, but they do offer defenses of human rights that reject the

inward nationalist outlook of the larger Israeli peace organizations, such as Peace Now.

Here are a few of them:

- *The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions*. This is an Israeli group working with the Palestinian Land Defense Committee and the Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights to oppose and resist the demolition of Palestinian homes and to rebuild demolished homes. (Since 1967, Israel has demolished over 7,000 Palestinian homes in the West Bank, Gaza, and Arab East Jerusalem. This has rendered at least 30,000 people homeless and traumatized.)
- *Rabbis for Human Rights*. This organization is comprised of Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, and Reconstructionist rabbis and students. It addresses violations of human rights of West Bank Palestinians and Israeli Arabs. It participates in the Israeli Coalition for The Prevention of Home Demolitions and is attempting to find Israeli families who will "adopt" the more than 2,000 Palestinian families who recently have demolition orders on their homes.

Other groups working nonviolently for human rights and Palestinian - Israeli cooperation include:

- *Gush Shalom* - Israeli Peace Bloc
- *Yesh Gvul* ("There Is a Border")-promoting refusal to serve in the Occupied Territories
- *Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*
- *Women in Black*
- *Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People*
- *International Solidarity Movement*
- *Ta'ayush*

These groups involve Israelis and Palestinians, Muslims and Jews in projects for protection of human rights, rejection of overt racism and ethnocentrism, and "grass-roots" activism. For this they are to be

commended and supported, including the many groups in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere which are aligned with them.

It should be noted, however, that the struggle waged by these various Israeli and Palestinian groups - courageous as they are - do not apparently address the systemic problems emanating from capitalism (e.g., unemployment, low wage work, lack of democracy) and from imperialism. In this respect they are quite oblivious to the extraordinary military and political involvement of the United States, the EU, and other outside powers in the entire Middle East region to secure the vast oil fields of the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea areas.

So, on the positive side, these groups for justice show that nonviolent cooperation across nationalist boundaries is possible, but, on the negative side, they pursue policies that only alleviate some of the more severe abuses within the conflict. In other words, their objective, a two state solution, will produce two societies with internal inequality and working class exploitation enforced by local upper classes who are rewarded with a share of the profits by foreign investors and imperialist patrons dedicated to political and economic control of the entire Middle East.

**5. Supporting Progressive Elements:** With so few class conscious political forces on either the Israeli or Palestinian side, it is important to cultivate what ever contacts we have, especially in the US and Europe, where groups engaged in Arab- Jewish cooperation, political dialogue, and public events are growing. The persistence of such small groups on both sides who have, at least emotionally, discarded exclusive and separatist ideologies is a positive trend through which individuals and groups might develop a critique of nationalism and imperialism, make calls for inter-ethnic unity, and explore the underlying class issues propelling this conflict. If, however, their critiques of Israeli and Palestinian policies are based solely on humanitarian objections, without comprehension of the class basis of the conflict and its place in

the imperial designs of larger powers, we will be forced to accept short-term "solutions" to this conflict which only perpetuate it.

This dilemma underscores the need for class conscious scholars and organizations to carefully research and describe the class foundations of both Israeli and Palestinian society, the foreign investment patterns which reinforce it, and the many linkages between this conflict and those in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea regions. When this information can be infused into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the possibilities for truly progressive political breakthroughs will substantially increase.

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#### **Book Announcements:**

**On The Edge Of Scarcity:  
Environment, Resources, Population,  
Sustainability, and Conflict**  
edited by Michael N. Dobkowski  
and Isidor Wallimann  
Syracuse University Press 2002

**Socioeconomic Democracy:  
An Advanced Socioeconomic System**  
by Robley E. George  
Praeger/Greenwood June 2002

Robley E. George is Director of the  
Center for the Study of Democratic  
Societies  
See details about the book and center at  
<http://www.centersds.com>

**From the Left** seeks submissions for its Fall 2002 issue. Do you have ideas for future issues? Would you like to write an article or make an announcement? How about letters to the editors? Please send proposals or texts by e-mail to Warren Goldstein, e-mail: [wgoldste@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:wgoldste@mail.ucf.edu). Deadline October 1, 2002

## **HARDT AND NEGRI: A NEW STAGE OF PRODUCTION, A NEW FORM OF RESISTANCE**

**A review of Michael Hardt and  
Antonio Negri's *Empire*  
Harvard University Press (2000)  
ISBN 0-674-00671-2**

**Gary J. Krug, Ph.D.  
Communication Studies  
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As the latest culmination of many fruitful collaborations, this offering from Hardt and Negri is a work of great depth and subtlety. At a time when theoretics abound but few have any explanatory power or useful suggestions, the authors excavate the historical and cultural roots of the present global social and political situation. Further, they map the mole tunnels which previous theorists and acts of social resistance have dug in this ground (See p. 57). In the end, these tunnels prove inadequate for describing and resisting the present manifestation of an emerging global and "systemic totality" of capital and power, "Empire."

Clearly distinguished from prior forms of state power and imperialism, this theoretical formulation of *Empire* advances the writings of Foucault, Deleuze, Guatarri and others in unraveling the biopolitical production of subjectivities and power, on a global scale.

As a social formation, *Empire* surpasses juridical and institutional definitions, overdetermining the forms of global power and the repressive mechanisms of individual states which are only the manifestations of "a single supranational figure of political power" (p. 9). The dimensions of biopolitical power exercised within *Empire* are familiar, but the global, transnational scale of this latest manifestation of capitalism generates social structures, legal justifications, and

subjectivities which are situated comfortably within postmodernism. Indeed, the crises of European and American modernity have been held in check only by the constant expansion of markets and resources and the appropriation of most forms of resistance.

With the collapse of colonial empires, the postcolonial impulse was arrested by the cold war and the United States's ambiguous relationship to the Third World. This intermediate phase in the development of *Empire* quickly segued into a decentering of all forms of production and subsequently transporting them to the former colonies. Such preparations allowed the most important phase to develop: the introduction of disciplinarity, through a Taylorist organization of labor and a Fordist wage regime. Thus, "from India to Algeria and Cuba to Vietnam, the state is the poisoned gift of national liberation" (p. 134).

New forms of development, particularly "informatization," appear within the emergence of "immaterial labor" and the development of new forms of social production, all on a global scale. The new output of production similarly disrupts the old ideas of property, capital, and power. It is perhaps in the hybridization of postmodernism and Marxism, that the authors reach the pinnacle of their theoretic powers in this book. Key is their account of postmodernism's failure to produce viable political resistance. The foundations of a postmodernist politics of difference, which elaborated in a critique of modernist binarisms, are themselves the strategies which *Empire* uses in the global market. Barriers and differences of identity and exclusion are multiplied, effacing the boundaries which defined modernist power and creating an inclusiveness which masqueraded as genuine participation. "Circulation, mobility, diversity, and mixture" are the forms taken by the ideology of *Empire*.

The authors are sympathetic to postmodernism, but their concern is that it too often misidentifies the enemy without realizing that the post-Enlightenment

fragmentation and partiality are precisely what allow Empire to operate across borders and the other old divisions. Not the play of postmodernism, but the solid old Marxist critique. "Mobility and hybridization are not liberatory, but taking control of the production of mobility and stasis, purities and mixtures is" (p. 156).

A new set of political demands commensurate with the new social realities is called for. Global citizenship would grant the right to move freely and to reconstitute the social as people choose. The authors argue the necessity of a social wage and guaranteed income to the multitude, that is, for all persons, because today all people labor in producing the new social, and much of this work cannot be measured or individualized: labor is becoming truly social. The new proletariat's right to reapportion -- not just the machine and its products, but also the immaterial and biopolitical -- is an essential condition for justice and freedom.

Against the emergence of Empire, new movements and new forms of the social develop. These open both the potential for mechanisms of repression and control, as well as the site of the contemporary political struggle. Indeed, some are already fighting on these developing frontiers -- for instance, the culture jamming activities of Kalle Lasn and the No-Logo demystifications of Naomi Klein resonate with the authors' call to seize the means of cultural production.

The dialectics of Marxism remain central to the authors' critique, and their version of communism proves remarkably powerful both in documenting the dimensions of repression and in outlining possibilities of resistance, both theoretical and actual. Familiar names, strategies, and groups appear -- the IWW, the Italian Marxists, Guy Debord -- not in their original cultural and political contexts, but thoughtfully integrated into a comprehensive, far-reaching analysis and theorizing of postmodern social, political, economic, and judicial conditions.

A work this broad, profound, and carefully thought-out cannot be parsed

easily into a few critical lines. However, Empire will significantly advance social and political theory and thought, and it should force a reappraisal of the place of Marxist critique within contemporary social theory. The historical bases of their position are clearly articulated and presented in formulations that are at once familiar and stimulatingly new. For those who may have wondered where Marxism would go after postmodernism and the collapse of the East Block, and indeed for all intellectuals, this is a very important work.

### **ASA Section on Marxist Sociology**

#### **2001-2002 Section Officers**

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**Marxist Section Homepage:**  
<http://csf.colorado.edu/marxist-sociology/index.html>

#### **Join PSN (Progressive Sociologists Network) Listserve**

If you would like to exchange views with like minded colleagues, you can join PSN - Progressive Sociologists Network, by sending mail to:

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**Section on Marxist Sociology  
Schedule of Sessions  
at ASA Annual Meeting**

**August 18, 2002  
Palmer House Hilton, Chicago**

**367: Section on Marxist Sociology  
Invited Paper Session. The Capitalist  
Class and the Crises of Globalization**

10:30 AM

Organizer and Presider: *Lauren Langman*,  
Loyola University, Chicago

1. Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited. *Saskia Sassen*, University of Chicago
2. Labor's Uses of Computer Power: Gaining on Globalization? *Arthur B. Shostak*, Drexel University
3. Shippers and Carriers: Class Struggle in the Global Logistics System. *Edna Bonacich*, University of California, Riverside
4. The Debate on Transnational Capitalist Class and the Transnational State. *William I. Robinson*, University of California, Riverside

**414: Section on Marxist Sociology  
Roundtables (one-hour)**

2:30 PM

Organizer: *Lauren Langman*, Loyola University of Chicago

**414.01 Structures, Struggles, and  
Subjects: Directions in Social  
Movements Studies**

Table Presiders: *Manjur E. Karim*, Culver-Stockton College and *A. Sean Noonan*, Kansas State University

1. The Historical Significance of the Palestinian Intifada. *Laura Khoury*, Rhode

- Island College; *Seif Da'Na*, University of Wisconsin, Parkside
2. Demobilizing a Movement: Provisional Republicanism in Ireland. *A. Sean Noonan*, Kansas State University
  3. Anti-Capitalism or Life-style Subculture?: Organization and Strategy of the Chicago Direct Action Network. *Stephanie Farmer*, University of Illinois, Chicago
  4. "Intimate Enemy": Islamic Militancy and Postcolonial Subjectivity. *Manjur E. Karim*, Culver-Stockton College

**414.02 Marxism and Globalization:  
Academia and Praxis**

Table Presider: *Eric Boria*, Loyola University Chicago

1. The Point of Description, Losing the Core?: A Case in Steel. *Eric Boria*, Loyola University Chicago
2. Americentrism and Legitimation in Academia. *Juan Carlos Rivera*, Loyola University Chicago
3. A Critical Theory of Global Justice. *Douglas K. Morris*, Loyola University Chicago
4. "I Am Not What I Look.." *Joanna Hadjicostandi*, University of Texas of the Permian Basin

**414.03 The Subversive Syllabus--Critical  
Questions for Curriculum  
Transformation: Connecting Classroom  
and Community for Today's Justice and  
Equality Movement**

Table Organizer: *Walda Katz-Fishman* and *Tomas Enrique Encarnacion*, Howard University and Project South

Panel: *Rose Brewer*, University of Minnesota and Project South; *Tomas Enrique Encarnacion*, Howard University and Project South; *Ralph Christopher Gomes*, Howard University; *Walda Katz-Fishman*, Howard University and Project South; *M. Bahati Kuumba*, Spelman College; *Nicole Rousseau*, Howard University; *Jerome Scott*, Project South:

Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide

#### **414.04 Marxism and Religion**

1. For Althusser: God as the Ideological State Apparatus. *Larry M. Miller*, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
2. For Benjamin: Marx and the Dialectic of Religion. *Randal Louis Hepner*, Loyola University Chicago

#### **414.05 Discipline and Punishment: Capitalist Style**

Table Presider: *Akili Sadiki*, Purdue University, Calumet

1. Problems of Integrating Ex-Offenders into the "New Economy." *Akili Sadiki*, Purdue University, Calumet
2. SuperMAX Prisons and the "New Economy." *Shaka Shakur*, Purdue University, Calumet
3. Warehousing the Poor: Profiling the Drug Use and Other Offenses of the Imprisoned Population. *Jacqueline Carrigan*, California State University, Sacramento

#### **414.06 Class and Oppression in Capitalist Societies**

Table Presider: *Alan Spector*, Purdue University, Calumet

1. Black Feminism and Black Womanism: Issues of Race, Gender, and Class. *Lorrell Kilpatrick*, Purdue University
2. Class Bias and Zero Tolerance Policies in the Schools. *Lynda Kintz*, Purdue University, Calumet
3. Environmental Racism: General Issues and a Case Study.
4. Migrant Workers and Class Oppression. *Guadalupe Ramirez*, University of Illinois, Chicago

#### **414.07 Capitalism and the Colonization of Leisure**

1. Race, Class, and High School Sports: Breaking Down Barriers? *Rhonda F. Levine*, Colgate University
2. Trad Here Nightly: Commodification in Traditional Irish Music Sessions. *Deborah L. Rapuano*, Loyola University Chicago
3. Car Crashes and Dead End Careers. *Heli Vaaranen*, University of Helsinki

#### **414.08 Capital in the Global Age From State Socialism to Capitalism:**

1. Economic Transformation in Eastern Europe. *Aneta E Galary*, Loyola University Chicago

#### **Section on Marxist Sociology Business Meeting**

3:30 PM

#### **450: Section on Marxist Sociology Paper Session: Understanding the Intersection of Class and Gender in Work and Family**

4:30 PM

Organizer: *Lauren Langman*, Loyola University, Chicago

Presider: *Ellen I. Rosen*, Brandeis University

1. Sam's Gals: Wal-Mart, Globalization, and the Exploitation of Women. *Ellen I. Rosen*, Brandeis University
2. Marx and Feminism in the Era of Globalization. *Martha E. Gimenez*, University of Colorado
3. Marxism and Feminism: A Necessary Relationship Papers. *Jennifer M. Lehmann*, University of Nebraska
4. Internet Technology, Globalization, and Feminism. *Valerie Scatamburlo-D'Annibale*, University of Windsor