



From the Left

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A Dysfunctional Electoral System

Douglas Kellner, University of California

The essence of democracy is the confidence of the electorate in the accuracy of voting methods and the fairness of voting procedures. In 2000, that confidence suffered terribly, and we fear that such a blow to our democracy may have occurred in 2004.

—John Conyers, Jr., Jerrold Nadler, Robert Wexler, members of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee (Note 1).

In retrospect, it is tragic that John Kerry conceded so quickly because challenging the voting system, insisting that all votes be counted, pointing to well-documented examples of voter suppression, demonstrating problems with machines that do not provide accurate counts, and dramatizing the dangers of computer hacking to fix elections could have produced impetus to reform the system. As critics have pointed out, Elections 2000 and 2004 produced more than 3 million spoiled ballots that could not be read by voting machines, generally because old machines often malfunction; 75 percent of the machines in Ohio were of this vintage. A hand-count of these votes could have made a difference. There were also thousands of provisional ballots to be counted in Ohio, many absentee ballots, and many irregularities to check out. It would have been important to carry out close examinations of the computer voting machines in Ohio and Florida to see if they provided accurate results (Note 2).

Examining voting machines could lead to voting reforms, such as those in California and Nevada, which required more transparency in the process, a paper trail to scrutinize in the

case of a disputed election, and attempts to block voter fraud. There should be increased efforts to enable voter access and prevent voter suppression. Voting and counting procedures should be transparent, uniform, safe, and efficient. There should be agreed-upon recount procedures, criteria to count contested votes, and scrutiny of the process by members of both parties and professional election officials.

The problems with the U.S. election system, however, go far beyond the machines. The dysfunctionality evident in Election 2000 and 2004 reveal problems with the arguably outmoded Electoral College system and the problematical nature of the U.S. system of proportional voting. Many citizens were surprised to

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Danger: The Presidency of George W. Bush

Barbara Chasin, Montclair State University

On January 19th, 2005, CNN devoted close to 3 hours of its prime-time evening programming, to answering the question “How Safe Are We?” Their coverage added up to an answer of “not very.” Even so, the network, underestimated the threats facing Americans since its concern was exclusively with terrorism. Not surprisingly, there are no media specials on how dangerous life in the U.S. is irrespective of terrorism. The presidency of George W. Bush has added to the dangers both from terrorism and from the routine workings of our social system. Americans are at greater risk than people living in comparable countries. (Chasin 2004: 18-23) Both major U.S. political parties are dominated by corporations, while unions and progressive movements are weaker here. The weakening of unions and of organized progressive movements has meant an increase in economic inequality and greater political inequality. The corporate sector’s gains in strength have meant a diminishing of regulations and the fraying of an already inadequate social safety net. Life is less healthy and safe in the United States even when Democrats hold office; but with their electoral base of people of color, working people and lower income groups, Democrats do pay more attention to the less privileged classes than do Republicans. (See Domhoff 2004: 68-69 for how this came about) Corporations know that Republicans are more dependably on their side. This is reflected in the 2004 campaign contributions. Corporate donors in the major economic sectors provided \$92,439,064 to the Bush campaign compared to \$48,008,059 to Kerry’s efforts. (Opensecrets 2004) Still, Bush, this time did get more of the popular votes than his rival.

During the 2004 campaign Bush successfully stoked people’s fears and then promised to

save them from the dangers he convinced them of. The irony is that Bush represents a danger to the very Americans who think he is their protector.

Terrorism

The Bush campaign pushed the message: “Vote for George W. or face more terrorist attacks.” However, the war in Iraq, sold as a way to lessen the terrorist threat, has spawned more

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From the Left seeks submissions for its Fall 2005 issue (roughly 1,500 words). Please send proposals or texts by email to Karen Bettez Halnon at kbh4@psu.edu by August 30, 2005.

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Toward a Critical Theory of Tourism

Kevin Fox Gotham, Tulane University

In this short essay I want to elaborate a nascent critical theory of tourism using the theoretical resources and concepts of the Frankfurt School and other Marxian scholars. My theoretical goals are motivated by a concern that much of the academic literature on tourism lacks a critical focus, fails to illuminate social relations of domination and exploitation, and neglects to analyze the contradictory and conflicting meanings and effects of tourism. As the largest industry in the world, tourism comprises a variety of socio-economic and cultural activities, including air and automobile travel, new forms of mobility, cruise ships, historic preservation sites, museums, casinos, theme parks, and other entertaining spaces that enable people to consume many different commodities. As a global industry, tourism unfolds through a process of bureaucratic rationalization and standardization in which different cities court the same transnational tourism firms (e.g., international hotel chains, casinos, car rental agencies, etc.) and embrace similar marketing strategies, thereby creating identicalness and homogeneity. On the other hand, in an era of major socio-economic restructuring, places vie to differentiate themselves, playing up their cultural distinctiveness, and advertising themselves as places to visit. Yet many of these developments remain under theorized and poorly understood. My goal is to begin to remedy these problems and omissions by pointing to five major dimensions of a substantive critical theory for understanding and analyzing tourism and its social consequences.

First, a critical theory embraces an orientation that views tourism sites and sights as plural, multidimensional, conflictual, and contradictory. From a dialectical and non-reductive perspective, a critical theory would identify and explain connections between different

forms of tourism (contrived, recreational, entertainment, heritage, etc.), different types of tourism sites (mega-events, gambling, sports, theme parks, tourist-oriented celebrations, historical sites, and so on), and different technologies of tourism (air travel, automobile travel, theming, simulation, virtual reality, and so on). What unites these diverse forms, types, and technologies of tourism are the twin processes of commodification and bureaucratic rationalization. In his famous essay, "The Culture Industry Reconsidered," Adorno ([1967] 1989, p. 129), criticized the transformation of spontaneous and authentic "popular culture" into an administered and reified "mass culture." Rather than autonomous culture creation, which is characteristic of social connectedness at the micro or everyday level, the culture industry works through a relentless process of commodification to hollow out the distinctive substantive content of social relations and their creations. In this process, culture, heritage, and tradition become centrally conceived and controlled social forms, objects of market-based instrumental relations that are devoid of emotional and sensuous life. Using Adorno's insights, a critical theory would interrogate how tourist spaces exhibit "incessantly repeated formulae" that suppress spontaneity and active creativity, and reflect and reinforce the trends of commodification, standardization, and fetishism.

Second, a critical theory would eschew generalized and abstract notions of tourism and tourists and examine the interconnected political, economic, and cultural processes that constitute the diverse forms, types, and technologies of tourism. A dialectical perspective would combine both macro- and micro-levels to explain how different governments and political organizations work with economic elites and private interests to produce tourist sites; how different marketers and advertising agents use images and theming strategies to represent tourism; which groups and interests oppose different tourism sites and extravaganzas; and which contending groups use tourism to advance their own resistant agendas.

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What a Marxist Professor Should Teach

Michael Francisconi
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Political Sociology is the study of power in a social setting. Power is the use of political capabilities to achieve particular goals. This political contest is carried out in a competition between diverse groups over, among other things, economic resources. Power is used to pursue a course of action against the interests of others. In doing this, use of cultural symbols charged with emotional significance is central. Political sociology explores the lived, everyday experiences of people as they are shaped by their economic position in a particular society and the world economy, which molds most political issues. The state is the tool of the dominant class or classes. Under capitalism the class that owns and controls corporate capital clearly dominates, either directly by providing leadership, or indirectly by defining the issues.

Sociology analyzes the historical juncture between worldwide trends and local issues. Anthropology gives this analysis a historical and cross-cultural reference point, supplementing sociology. Social movements are domestic affairs of local or national substance, created out of national manifestations of international trends. The fate of a social movement must resonate with the local situation, but is ultimately determined by global events. The capitalists and their supporters gain the means of support for their economic and political dominance by maximizing the illusion that their narrow interests are the national interests as a whole. This is done not only by control over economic production and distribution, but by physical means of coercion and education. Thus the capitalist state betrays its democratic justification.

Because class is the relationship to the means of production and distribution, competing classes have competing interests. Competition between capitalists is minimized

long-range view, which is not limited by the short-term profits of the individual capitalist. The state can make concessions to rebellious sections of the working class to preserve capitalism even when many capitalists may disagree.

Control over the labor of the direct producers by an elite leads to resistance to domination. Ideologies of legitimacy lessen the problem, but imperfectly, because suffering is real. People create their lives through conscious action. Insight into inequalities and oppression may exist while knowledge of possible solutions is often hidden.

Social equilibrium is always threatened. While the dominant ideology legitimates existing inequalities, different classes will develop different interpretations of this ideology. These diverse interpretations of traditional dogma develop into rival opinions.

The state is the organized control over classes, class factions, and ethnic groups. In this contest competing groups do not have equal power. The dominant group controls the resources necessary for production and they define the logic of stability. The rules of political behavior are agreed upon; to go beyond the rules is to undermine the security of the whole of society.

Any collective action by the masses short of social revolution requires the strengthening of the existing state institutions and the economy upon which they rest. Every government strives for social, political, and economic order. The rules that protect the ruling class are the only acceptable political behavior in any state society.

The claim is that the state is erected outside of the daily needs of any element within society to protect the social whole. In fact it is the capitalist class that is protected from individual capitalists and other classes antagonistic to capitalism. Laws reflect these relationships. This is what gives the state its measure of autonomy.

Through the control of the popular media, churches, and schools, the capitalists make their interests appear to be that of all of society. Popular culture supports much of the

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learn in the disputed Election 2000 that the Electoral College involved a system whereby those chosen to vote in the ritual in which the president was chosen did not necessarily have to follow the mandate of the voters in their district. In practice, state legislatures began binding electors to the popular vote, although as was abundantly clear in Election 2000, “faithless electors”—electors who vote for whomever they please—were theoretically possible. (Half of the states attempt to legally bind electors to the popular vote in their state, but it would still be possible for an elector to shift his or her vote, a dangerous outcome for a genuinely democratic society and a possibility much discussed after Election 2000.) “Electors” are rather mysteriously chosen in any case and this process should be examined and fixed.

Initially, the Electoral College was part of a compromise between state and local government. Allowing electors to choose the president provided guarantees to conservatives who wanted the Electoral College to serve as a buffer -between what they perceived as an unruly and potentially dangerous public and the more educated and civic-minded legislators who could, if they wished, overturn votes by the people. Originally, the U.S. Congress was also elected in this manner. But in 1913 a constitutional amendment led to direct election of senators. Many argue this should also be the model for presidential elections. The current Electoral College system, as critics have maintained, is based on eighteenth-century concerns and is arguably obsolete and in need of systematic reconstruction in the twenty-first century.

Moreover, the proportional representation system in the Electoral College has serious problems that surfaced in the heated debates over Election 2000. Smaller states are disproportionately awarded with Electoral College votes, so that voters in less populated states such as Idaho or Wyoming have more proportionate influence

in choosing the president than in states such as California or New York. As Jim Hightower notes, Wyoming’s electors and proportionate vote represent 71,000 voters each, while Florida’s electors each represent 238,000. In New York, 18 million people now get 33 electoral votes for the presidency, but fewer than 14 million people in a collection of small states also get 33. As Duke University’s Alex Keyssar argued in a November 20, 2000, *New York Times* op-ed piece, disproportionate weighting of the votes of smaller states violates the principle of one person, one vote, which according to a series of Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s, lies at the heart of U.S. democracy. “To say that a vote is worth more in one district than in another would . . . run counter of our fundamental ideas of democratic government,” the Court announced in 1964. “Legislators,” wrote Chief Justice Earl Warren, “represent people, not trees or acres.” Thus, the current system of proportionate state votes where all states get two votes and then the rest are divided according to population is unfair. A more reasonable system would simply allot states proportionate votes according to their populations, so that each vote throughout the nation would be equal in choosing a president.

Further problems with the U.S. Electoral College and system of proportional representation involve the winner-take-all rule operative in most states. As the Election 2000 Florida battle illustrates, in a winner-take-all system,

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terrorists. Even the State Department admits an increase in terrorist incidents between 2002 and 2003, with more people being injured or killed. (Weisman 2004). CNN's broadcast never alluded to this nor to any other aspect of U.S. foreign policy.

While airline passengers are having their shoes and, in some cases, their bodies inspected at the airports, potential terrorist targets are being left unprotected. Ports, nuclear power plants, chemical plants, water supplies and vehicles transporting hazardous materials are all vulnerable to attack. Only about 6% of the "high-risk" shipping containers that are off-loaded daily at the nation's ports get inspected. CNN did note the dangers here but didn't point out that major fundraisers for the president are regulating the maritime sector. (Krikorian 2004, Public Citizen 2004). Through lobbying, individual contributions and PACS, the relevant industries spent over \$220 million to maintain their control over the nation's infrastructure (Brzezinski 2004, Canipe 2004: 10).

The chemical industry, ignored by CNN, provides an example. There are 15,000 chemical factories in the U.S. Security at these plants ranges from totally absent to inadequate. Bush moved chemical security from the EPA to the department of Homeland Security. The EPA had identified 123 chemical facilities which if attacked posed a threat to over 1,000,000 people and 700 endanger over 100,000. Tom Ridge's department decreased that number to 2 facilities. The EPA has enforcement powers to compel security measures; Homeland Security relies on voluntary measures by the chemical industries, which have an interest in not spending money, and an aversion to government regulation (Kennedy 2004, Hind and Halperin 2004).

The systematic use of torture to allegedly attain information has been receiving attention. Yet non-abusive forms of intelligence gathering are short changed. This was also ignored by CNN.

As of late September 2004 the FBI had not yet translated over 120,000 hours of what a New York Times' journalist described as "potentially valuable terrorism-related recordings." The reason according to the FBI's Inspector-General is that they do not have the resources to do the necessary work speedily and accurately. (Lichtblau 2004)

Health and the Environment

Whatever the potential terrorist threats, every day millions of Americans are at risk from environmental contamination, workplace hazards, and inadequate health care. Little media attention is given to these systemic threats. Some protections have been put into place because of past social activism. The Bush administration threatens to undo these.

Bush's misleadingly named "Clean Skies" initiative would greatly undermine previously mandated limits on the pollutants causing smog, acid rain, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxide. The EPA is creating new rules that allow companies to have, in the words of a National Association of Manufacturers official, "a refreshingly flexible approach to regulation." In a less sanguine vein the American Lung Association referred to Bush's roll back of air quality rules as "the most harmful and unlawful air-pollution initiative ever undertaken by the federal government" (Shaw 2004, quotes in Barcolli 2004: 76). Mercury poisoning can cause brain damage in children and fetuses. In the decade before Bush took office, government regulations had reduced mercury emissions from waste incinerators, but omitted regulating those from power plants. This was about to be addressed by the EPA, but when Bush took office he interfered with the regulatory review process. Additionally, an EPA report on mercury risk was edited to downplay the risks (Krugman 2004, Lee, Nussbaum 2004).

Global warming threatens the whole planet. It is linked to an increase in "natural" disasters. (BBC) In the United States deadly heat waves such as that in Chicago in 1995, and diseases associated with warmer climates, such as West Nile fever, are among the outcomes, and it is likely the recent torrential rain storms in

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California are also a result (Alley 2004, Steven 2004, Luers 2004). Yet when the EPA issued a report on climate change, the writers were ordered to make changes that minimized the impact of human activity. What the Union of Concerned Scientist describes as a “discredited study of temperature records, funded in part by the American Petroleum Institute” was made a part of the EPA's document on climate change (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2). The Bush administration also withdrew promised support for the Kyoto treaty.

Lead poisoning wreaks havoc on children's developing bodies. Experts on lead poisoning recommended by the federal government's Centers for Disease Control to serve on a committee on the problem were rejected by first term Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson. Lead industry choices were selected in their place. (Johnson, Meter, 3).

Workers

Work has become even more dangerous and unhealthy under Bush. The administration plans to reduce the number of workplace inspectors, cut funding for workers' safety training programs, and cut funding for research on workers' health and safety. The White House administration is ignoring OSHA recommendations that would protect construction workers, miners, chemical industry employees and others. (Drutman). Higher levels of coal dust will be allowed in mines and the hours truckers can drive continuously have been lengthened (Brinkley).

Following ten years of efforts by the labor movement, the Clinton administration enacted strong ergonomic rules. When Bush took office in January 2001, the White House backed a repeal of these protections. The AFL-CIO reports that since the rollback about 1.8 million workers have had ergonomic problems (Multinational Monitor, AFL-CIO).

Science
Accurate information is essential for people to make informed decisions to protect

themselves and others. The Bush administration has attacked science, scientists, and the public's access to information, excising from government agency websites over six thousand documents which detail the dangers of environmental contamination, and the transporting and piping of hazardous substances. Executive orders have increased the EPA's power to keep information secret. The public will not have access to some information on dangerous vehicles. (Brinkley) Funding for the National Science Foundation has been drastically cut. (Chait)

In July 2004, over 4000 scientists signed a statement tellingly titled “Restoring Scientific Integrity in Policy Making,” charging the administration with distorting and suppressing scientific knowledge. The endorsers include 127 National Academy of Science members, 48 of them Nobel Prize winners. (Revkin).

Conclusion

The corporate media, such as CNN, while providing some useful information, do not systematically expose the hypocrisy of the president, nor analyze the real dangers that people face as a result of the current workings of Bush-era American capitalism. A new opium of the people, the media soothes, distracts, misleads, and weakens the ability to act. Failing to expose systemic dangers, it contributes instead to a “culture of fear” (Glassner, 1999). The American people are told that that they are threatened by Islamic fanatics, young black men, uncontrollable accidents, and disasters, but are never warned about the workings of a less and less regulated capitalist system, accompanied by cuts to social programs that take their own toll (Piven: Pear). We on the left have the opportunity and responsibility to challenge this view.

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100 percent of the state's electoral votes goes to a 50.1 percent majority in presidential elections (or less if there were more than two candidates, as is increasingly the case in presidential elections). Maine and Nebraska are exceptions, and it would be possible to follow their example and to split presidential state votes proportionately according to the actual percentage of votes candidates get in each separate state, rather than following the winner-take-all rule, where a handful of votes in a state such as Florida, or Ohio, gives the entire state, and even the election, to one candidate.

Hence, the Electoral College and U.S. system of proportional representation should be seriously debated and reforms should be undertaken if U.S. democracy is to revitalize itself in the coming years after the debacle of 2000 and persistent questions concerning 2004. As many have argued, there are strong reasons for proportionate representation in U.S. presidential elections. However, separation of election officials from political operatives and the training of professional, nonpartisan election workers should also be on the reform agenda. In Election 2000, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris, also head of the Bush-Cheney ticket in Florida, did everything possible to steal the election from Al Gore, and in 2004, Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell played a similar role. To deal with all of these problems, a high-level commission could be appointed to study how to modernize and update the system of electing the president in the United States. Since the political establishment cannot be counted upon to undertake these reforms, it will be necessary for constituencies—academic, local, and national—to devise reforms for the seriously challenged system of “democracy” in the United States.

Furthermore, it is clear that money has corrupted the current electoral system and that campaign finance reform is necessary to avoid overwhelming influence by lobbies, corpora-

tions, and the corruption that a campaign system fueled by megabucks produces. The current election system, in which millions of dollars are needed for a federal election, ensures that only candidates from the two major parties have a chance of winning, that only candidates who are able to raise millions of dollars can run, and that those who do run and win are beholden to those who have financed their campaigns—guaranteeing control of the political system by corporations and the wealthy.

In Elections 2000 and 2004, the excessive amount of money pumped into the \$3-billion-plus electoral campaigns guaranteed that neither candidate would say anything to offend the moneyed interests funding the election, and would thus avoid key issues of importance and concern. The debts accrued by the two major parties to their contributors were obvious in the initial appointments made by the Bush-Cheney Election 2000 transition team, which rewarded precisely those corporations and supporters who financed the Bush presidency. The Bush administration provided legislative awards for its major contributors, allowing the big corporations that supported them to write Bush administration energy and communication policy and to help draft legislation for deregulation that served their interests, in effect allowing big contributors to make public policy (see Kellner [2001], 187ff.).

In 2001, a McCain-Feingold finance reform bill was passed, but it has been continually watered down and is unlikely to reform U.S. political -funding. -Indeed, a record amount of money was raised for the 2004 election as loopholes were exploited to create new types of fundraising and political action groups. Thus, there is a definite need for public financing of elections. Four states currently allow full public financing for candidates who agree to campaign with fundraising and spending limits (Arizona, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont), and this would be a splendid model for the entire nation.¹⁰ Public financing for elections at local,

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state, and national levels would only be viable in a media era with free national television, free access to local media, and Internet sites offered to the candidates. Hence, the television networks should be required to provide free national airtime to presidential candidates to make their pitches, and television-paid political advertising should be eliminated (see the elaboration of this argument in Kellner 1990). The broadcasting networks were given a tremendous bonanza when the Federal Communications Commission provided a wealth of spectrum to use for digital broadcasting, doubling the amount of space it licensed to television broadcasters with estimates of the value of the space costing up to \$70 billion. Congress failed to reestablish public service requirements that used to be in place before the Reagan-Bush-Clinton deregulation of telecommunications. As fair payback for the broadcast spectrum giveaway, broadcast media should provide free airtime for political discourse that strengthens democracy.

Efforts were made to get the television networks to enable the public to get free messages from the candidates, but they were defeated. President Clinton appointed an advisory panel to assess how to update public service requirements of television broadcasts in the wake of the spectrum giveaway. The panel recommended that television broadcasters voluntarily offer five minutes of candidate-centered airtime in the 30 days before the election. Clinton proposed this recommendation in his 1998 State of the Union address, but broadcasters fiercely rejected the proposal. In the Senate, John McCain and Conrad Burns announced that they would legislatively block the FCC's free airtime initiative. In fact, political advertising is a major cash cow for the television networks who regularly charge political candidates excessively high rates, although they are supposed to allow "lowest unit charge" (LUC) for political advertising. Such LUC rates, however, mean that the ads could be preempted, and desperate campaigns want to make sure that they get their advertising message out at a

crucial time and thus are forced to pay higher rates.

Voter rights initiatives also need to be carried forth to prevent voter suppression and provide adequate voting machines to all precincts, independent of their wealth or political connections. Once again in 2004, the Republicans practiced systematic voter suppression, challenging voters at the polls and intimidating potential voters in a myriad of ways. In addition, once again there were a shocking lack of voting machines and personnel, especially in swing minority and student precincts that typically vote Democratic. There should be strong penalties for voting suppression, fraud, too few voting machines, and inadequate poll staffing.

There also should be a National Voting Day holiday, as many countries have, so that working people can vote without economic penalty. One of the scandals of Election 2004 was the terribly long lines in minority and working-class neighborhoods in Ohio and elsewhere, due to inadequate numbers of voting machines and not enough polling staff. There were reports in Ohio of lines lasting hours (especially in heavily Democratic neighborhoods), forcing many to leave the lines to return to work. This is an intolerable situation in a democracy and efforts should be made to maximize voting access; to simplify voting procedures; and to provide adequate, trained, and nonpartisan election staff as well as reliable and trustworthy machines.

In addition, schools should provide, as Dewey argued (1917), citizenship education as well voter literacy. Ballots are often highly complex and intimidating and there should be efforts to begin educating people of all ages and walks of life on how to vote. Better designed ballots and more reliable voting systems are obviously a prerequisite for voting reform, but individuals need to be better informed on how to vote and what the specific issues are on ballots, ranging from local to state and national issues.

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A Dysfunctional Electoral System (Continued from page 10)

There is little doubt that U.S. democracy is in serious crisis, and unless there are reforms, its decline will accelerate. Although voter participation increased from an all-time low in 1996 of 49 percent of the eligible electorate to 51 percent in Election 2000 and 60 percent in Election 2004, this percentage is still fairly low. The United States is on the low end of democratic participation in presidential elections among democracies throughout the world. Obviously, much of the country remains alienated from electoral politics despite hotly contested elections in 2000 and 2004.

Democracy requires informed citizens and access to information and thus the viability of democracy is dependent on citizens seeking out crucial information, having the ability to access and appraise it, and to engage in public conversations about issues of importance. Democratic media reform and alternative media are thus crucial to revitalizing and even preserving the democratic project in the face of powerful corporate and political forces. How media can be democratized and what alternative media can be developed will of course be different in various parts of the world, but without a democratic media politics and alternative media, democracy itself cannot survive in a vigorous form, nor will a wide range of social problems be engaged or even addressed. Reinvigorating democracy also requires a reconstruction of education with expanded literacies, democratized pedagogies, and education for citizenship. As John Dewey long ago argued (1917), education is an essential prerequisite for democracy and public education should strive to produce more democratic citizens. A reconstruction of education also requires cultivating media, computer, and multiple literacies for a computer-based economy and information-dependent society (Kellner 2002 and 2004). In an increasingly technological society, media education should become an important part of the curriculum, with instruction focused

on critical media and computer literacy as well as on how to use media for expression, communication, and social transformation.

Alternative media need to be connected with progressive movements to revitalize democracy and bring an end to the current conservative hegemony. After the defeat of Barry Goldwater in 1964 when conservatives were routed and appeared to be down for the count, they built up a movement of alternative media and political organizations; liberals and progressives now face the same challenge. In the current situation, we cannot expect much help from the corporate media and need to develop ever more vigorous alternative media. The past several years have seen many important steps in the fields of documentary film, digital video and photography, community radio, public access television, an always-expanding progressive print media, and an ever-growing liberal and progressive Internet and blogosphere. While the right has more resources to dedicate to these projects, the growth of progressive democratic public spheres has been impressive. Likewise, the energy, political organization, and finances mobilized to attempt to defeat the Bush-Cheney Gang were impressive, but more needs to be done to defeat the conservatives, building on the achievements of the past years.

The agenda for the Left the next four years involves sustained struggle against Bush administration policies to help to bring the most rightwing regime in recent US history to an end, and to fight for a revitalization of democracy and a progressive agenda. To conclude, I'd like to quote a passage from Tony Kushner's recent play *Caroline, or Change*. The play is set in the 1960s at the time of the Kennedy assassination when much of the world looked to the United States as a beacon of hope and to the Kennedy administration as an instrument of progress. Coming out of the civil rights struggles, there was new hope that democracy and freedom really were on the march and that reactionary forces were being

(Continued on page 12)



A Dysfunctional Electoral System (Continued from page 11)

defeated, making one proud to be an American. In the play's epilogue, Caroline's teenage daughter talks of how she and some friends had just torn down a Civil War statue, signifying the legacy of racism, and she declared

*You can't hold on, you nightmare men,
Your time is past now on your way
Get gone and never come again!*

*For change come fast and change come slow but
Everything changes!
And you got to go!*

References:

- Ceaser, James W., and Andrew E. Busch. 2001. *The Perfect Tie*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Schechter, Danny. 2001. *Mediocracy 2000—Hail to the Thief: How the Media Stole the U.S. Presidential Election*. Electronic book available at www.mediachannel.org.

Notes

¹This text is excerpted from *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy* just published by Paradigm Press.

²For a wide range of materials on voter suppression, machine malfunctions, potential fraud and corruption, and thousands of voting problems in Election 2004, see the sources at <http://www.ejfi.org/Voting/Voting-1.htm>; <http://www.votersunite.org>; <http://www.openvotingconsortium.org>; <http://www.demos-usa.org>; and <http://www.verifiedvoting.org>; and <http://www.blackboxvoting.org>. The only mainstream media figure following the 2000 voting fraud and corruption controversy was MSNBC's Keith Olbermann on his nightly news show *Countdown* and in his blog *Bloggermann* at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6210240>.

³See Jim Hightower's proposals after Election 2000 for Electoral College reform at www.alternet.org. In his December 4, 2000 online interview, Howard Kurtz noted that Gore would have won the

Electoral College if every state received electoral votes in proportion to population: "Bush won 30 states for 271 and Gore won 21 for 267. But if you take away the two electors for each senator, and just apportion electors by number of Representatives (i.e., in proportion to population), Gore wins 225 to 211" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/liveonline/00/politics/media/backtalk120400.htm>).

⁴In a chapter on "Electoral Reform" after Election 2000, Ceaser and Busch (2001) lay out the case for a proportional representation system, as opposed to a direct popular majority vote electoral system, but do not consider the strong arguments that I cite above to eliminate the "unfaithful elector" problem by mandating direct presidential voting, nor do they take seriously arguments against the current U.S. system of proportional voting with its winner-take-all electoral vote system. In any case, in the current political climate, there is little pressure for major electoral reform, although on the local level there have been attempts to require updating of voting machines, streamlining of voting processes, stipulation of recount procedures, and other technical changes to avoid a recurrence of the debacle of the 2000 election in Florida; unfortunately, efforts to replace punch-card and optical-scan ballots with computerized voting machines may have made matters worse, necessitating another cycle of reform.

⁵On the need for public financing of elections, see Nick Nyhart and Joan Claybrook, "The Dash for Cash: Public Financing Is the Only Way to End the Unfair Tilt of the 'Wealth Primary,'" *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 2003. The authors' groups Public Campaign and Public Citizen have been working for public financing of elections.

⁶On the history of efforts to reform television advertising, see Charles Lewis, "You Get What You Pay For: How Corporate Spending Blocked Political Ad Reform and Other Stories of Influence," in Schechter (2001), pp. 62–73; and the Alliance for Better Campaigns, "Gouging Democracy: How the Television Industry Profiteered on Campaign 2000," in Schechter (2001), pp. 77–92. In another important article in Schechter (2001), Lawrence K. Grossman notes that one of broadcasting's "dirty little secrets" is its "sustained and high-priced lobbying against finance reform" (p. 75).



Toward a Critical Theory of Tourism (Continued from page 3)

Analyzing the different dimensions of tourism also means exploring what social identities are connected with different tourist spaces, how people use and consume tourist sites to reinforce or challenge identity categories, and what mechanisms regulate the distribution and use of particular tourism sites. In this sense, while particular tourist spaces are produced by a combination of local power interests and multinational corporations, and regulated by various governmental frameworks, it is also necessary to explore the lived consumer experience and the role of human agents in shaping meanings and representations of different spaces.

The above points suggest a third concern, namely, that a critical theory would reject views that tourists are cultural dupes that are manipulated by the producers and organizers of tourism. David Harvey (1989; 1988) has suggested that festivals and tourism-oriented celebrations are not only important for generating profit and supporting inward investment, but for pacifying local people; a form of ideological control referred to as “bread and circuses.” Yet residents and tourists are not simply passive recipients of accepted meanings produced by advertisers, place marketers, and tourism organizations. They are actively involved in the production of meaning and, indeed, produce meanings, some which are unintended by tourism promoters. Indeed, tourist spaces are sites of struggle where powerful economic and political interests are often forced to defend what they would prefer to have taken for granted. In my research on tourism in New Orleans, for example, I have found that some local residents view tourism as a harbinger of social instability, a threat to local culture, and mechanism for commercializing local celebrations and festivals. Others view tourism as a potential resource for pre-

city to an international audience. Still others have ambivalent feelings about the growth of tourism and often change their mind. Such different views suggest that tourism is contested terrain, with a variety of groups and interests attempting to produce and use tourism sights and sites for their own purposes (Gotham 2002; 2005a; 2005b). Against one-sided and reductive conceptions, we can recognize that there are institutional opportunities (not necessarily equally distributed) for opposing groups to use tourism organizations, technologies, and sites to challenge dominant meanings of power relations.

Fourth, a critical theory would analyze relations of domination and subordination, and the ways that alienation, inequality, and exploitation are built into the structure and operation of tourism. For Karl Marx ([1844] 1978), alienation manifested itself at the workplace where workers are alienated from the products of their labor, the process of production, from themselves as well as other human beings, and from their species-being and nature. Later, Herbert Marcuse (1968; 1964, pp. 159-200) and other Marxian scholars like Henri Lefebvre ([1958] 1991) drew attention to how alienation had moved into the realm of consumption in which the production and consumption of signs and images, rather than tangible material goods, becomes a vehicle of commodified exchange and communication. It is important to recognize that production and consumption are not mutually exclusive. Marx recognized the dialectical nature of production-consumption in his early comments on capitalism, pointing out in the *Grundrisse* that “production is also immediately consumption, consumption is also immediately production. Each is immediately its opposite” (1978, p. 229). What is important is that a critical theory would eschew univocal explanations and refuse to reduce tourism to any one dimension, e.g., production or

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Toward a Critical Theory of Tourism (Continued from page 13)

consumption. Thus, a critical theory would draw to the role that different tourism sites play as forms of commodified pleasure, how tourist sites define individuals as consumers, and the impact of the tourism industry in using advertising and marketing to constitute tourist desires and needs, and them exploiting them for profit.

Fifth, a critical theory analyzes past developments and current happenings using the method of immanent critique. The Frankfurt School's notion of immanent critique evaluates the existing state of affairs in terms of society's dominant ideas and values, showing in various ways the problems and unrealized potentials. The purpose of immanent critique, as Horkheimer noted in *Eclipse of Reason* (1974), is to discern what aspects of existing society should be negated or transcended, in order to create a better society. To grasp the changes that are occurring, we need to move beyond mainstream accounts that stress the ascendancy of cultural politics over class and the state, or celebrate tourism for increasing consumer "choice" and "freedom." In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno (1972, p. 154) noted that consumer choice and "individuality" are "the ideology of the pleasure industry." One advantage of critical theory is that it sensitizes us to the role of transnational corporations in homogenizing cultural production and constraining consumer preferences. Another advantage is that critical theory can help fashion analyses that probe specific social conditions, power dynamics, and patterns of domination and subordination within the sphere of tourism. Finally, critical theory can expose the theoretical limitations of rival explanations that the refuse to critically probe the social relations of exploitation underlying the production of tourism. These theoretical advantages can help identify the key

actors and organized interests involved in manufacturing cultural signifiers, and interrogate and explain the consequences of the actions of powerful groups, thereby pointing to possibilities for progressive societal transformation.

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What a Marxist Professor Should Teach
(Continued from page 4)

upper class values. Morality is culturally defined in this way. When education fails, coercion will be used to maintain order.

Capitalism incorporates other economies to meet its needs. The logic of capitalism redefines other moral traditions to support private property and production for profit. Alternative visions are neutralized, incorporated, or defined as subversive. Through hegemony all other ideologies seem silly. At present those who would challenge the logic of capitalism are weak and poorly organized.

The political and economic institutions supporting capitalism ultimately control the Universities, for the benefit of capital. Like government the anti-government and anti-intellectual business leaders mask the fact that, the University, like government, exists for the benefit of big business. Dissent among government employees or University intellectuals have been, at times, defined as irresponsible and unprofessional.

There is a resistance by people in authority to real emancipation of the oppressed classes. In modern society continual use of power combines ideology with concentrated and organized use of force to a point where the citizens do not always know where one begins and the other stops. The state creates government to establish policies, administration to carry out policies, and the military or police to ensure conformity to these policies. Because of the monopoly on the legitimate use of force controlled by the state, any revolution would require the elimination of the existing state. The old state reflects certain relationships of exploitation; when these relations change, the old state can no longer function properly.

In US history, Immigration laws to keep out or expel dissidents have been used. The extensive denials of due process and exaggerated use of police powers are widespread. Trial by

exhibiting rumor at the expense of legal procedures has been common throughout the 20th century. Public hearings to ruin the reputations of either the defendant or any witnesses who fail to provide what the government expected have been a major strategy. The use of covert police surveillance is still common. Every time working people in the US gain more control over parts of the state, the capitalists increase their efforts to maintain control over all functions of the state.

The totalitarian power of capital flourishes in a bourgeois democracy. Capital becomes politically more powerful than government, and somewhat independent of the state. Capital is free to move anywhere, but the state is limited by geography. The needs of the bourgeoisie in a capitalist state deform and limit political democracy. Hostility and violence, supported by liberals who espouse democracy, is directed against anyone who, in reality, defends authentic democracy. Institutional violence used against democratic movements in the US has been central to the formation of "American" political culture. Political parties and elections become the sum total of democracy. To move beyond the two party electoral processes is considered subversive.

Law and order has become the main justification for the violation of basic human rights in the US. Any group that is perceived as a threat to private property or questions the assumptions of a capitalist economy is treated as seditious. Mass culture has been manipulated to create popular demand for the suppression of alternative views of life. The open support for neo-colonialism around the world with violence as the official policy while preserving a world empire is one example. Life in liberal society is mystified; in a way that creates a total culture of support for a capitalist economy.

Ignorance is the main goal of liberal education. Education at its core is a lie. Liberal edu-

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What a Marxist Professor Should Teach
(Continued from page 15)

cation is designed to limit debate. Education supports the ethics of private property, market economy, and an elite hierarchy. Education as it stands is mis-education. The moral foundations of the core values of “American” society need to become openly questioned and debated in the classroom. The professor must join the intellectual struggle against the highbrow millstone around every student’s neck. If education is to become a medium of liberation, the University must expose it as an agent for class oppression.

The cooperation of many University professors with policy makers during the cold war seriously compromised the moral justification of higher education. The University participated directly and indirectly in worldwide aggression and state supported terrorism. The primary concern with many in administration was to protect the University’s source of income, thus creating a loyal slave of Empire. The Community College was created at the other end of the academic spectrum to “cool out” working aspirants, who received an education that did not threaten the elite.

We professors must engage in seditious sabotage within the ranks of the University. Everything must be called into question, including higher education. We must explore the historical and sociological roots of all academic departments. Who benefits and who doesn’t by the underlying assumptions? How does what we teach fit into the ideology of hegemony? Education that is not subversive is not education.

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ASA 2005 Marxist Sessions

Political Economy, Race, and Gender in a Post-September 11 World

Session Organizer: Karen Bettez Halnon, Pennsylvania State University kbh4@psu.edu

9/11, the Media, and Bush Hegemony

Douglas Kellner, UCLA

“Blood, Culture & Vicious People.” Right Wing Strategies for Protecting America Post-9/11

Carina Bandhauer, Western Connecticut State University

Days of War and Cut-Backs: Class, Race, and Gender in the Post-9/11 United States

Barbara Chasin, Montclair State University

The Politics of Imperial Plunder and War: Its Impact on Filipino Women on the Home Front and Across National Borders

Ligaya Lindio-McGovern
Indiana University-Kokomo

The Problem of Generations Revisited

Lauren Langman
Loyola University of Chicago

Big Bold and Brazen Lies, a Cowardly Media, and Dicey Voting Machines: How the Republicans Did it Again

Douglas Kellner, University of California

The Left and Elections: Will it Ever Learn?

G. William Domhoff, University of California

Teaching Marxism

Session Organizer and Presider:
Lauren Langman, Loyola University of Chicago
Panel: *Kevin B. Anderson*, Purdue University
Edna Bonacich, University of California Riverside
Joe Feagin, Texas A&M University
John Bellamy Foster, University of Oregon
Erik Olin Wright, University of Wisconsin

Description: Marxism, as a critique of capitalist political economy and its contradictions, was rooted in the class system of the 19th C. The material foundations of capitalist domination rested on as a market economy where wealth was based on the ownership of private property or sale of wage labor that in turn led to the alienation and exploitation of the working classes. Since its early formulations, Marxism has been greatly refined and developed and now offers a crucial perspective for the sociological understanding of a broad range of social phenomenon. This session is oriented to the larger sociological community concerned with teaching the leading edges of research and theory. A number of well-known, Marxist scholars will share their expertise along a broad range of contemporary issues to show the continued importance of the Marxist Tradition to sociology in general. Salient topics will include the contemporary class, race, and gender systems that are now located in a globalized context, the impact of capitalism on the environment, and the diversity of Marxist theories—especially the more humanist and critical theories.



ASA 2005 Marxist Roundtables

Table 1: Public Sociology: Marxist and Non-Marxist Views Discussant: Stephanie McSpirit

"A Critique of the Public Sociology Program," Paul Paolucci

"Activism and the University Setting," Joanna Hadjicostandi

"Why Public Sociology is Neither," Mathieu De-flem

Table 2: Institutions, Spectacle, and Commodity Culture Presider: Matthew Irvin

"Howard Stern Carnival and Political Transformation," Karen Bettez Halnon and Sharon Gerczyk

"Gangsta Rap: Cultural Capital, Community Cohesion and Political Resistance-Meaning Making in Music Production," Darby Southgate

"Co-opting Feminism for Profit: Wedding Planners and the Commodity Frontie," Kristin Blakely

Table 3: New Perspectives for Marxist Theory Discussant: Jacqueline Carrigan

"Bringing Multitudes Back In: Rethinking the Persistence of the Subject in Sociology," Todd Bowers

"Reflecting Cultural Values," Purna Mohanty

"No Marxists in China?," Stuard Shafer

Table 4: Inequalities of Race, Gender, Class, and the Household Unit

Presider: Jennifer Lehmann

Discussant: Maya Becker

"Adolescent Alcohol Use: The Impact of Parental Attitudes and Behaviors," Frieda Fowler

"The Social and Cultural Forces Impacting the Experience of Mothering," Jeane-Anne Sutherland-Bindas

"Racial Disparities in Wealth and Marital Satisfaction," Joe Michael

Table 5: Labor Theory and Process

Discussant: Matt Vidal

"The Walmartization of America: The Impact on Labor Practices and Urban Environment," Lloyd Klein, Steve Lang, and Donal Malone

"Alienation and Propensity," Micah Holland

Table 6: Violence and Right Radicalism and the Global and National Levels

Presider: Daniel Egan

Discussant: Thomas Keil

"Evolution of Fascism: Class Perspectives versus Psychological Perspectives," Alan Spector

"Competing Visions of Loyalism in Post-Industrial Belfast," Carolyn Gallaher

"Legitimate Authority vs. Violence: Attitudes of Audiences in the Caucasus and the USA," Jeffrey Halley



Book Announcements

Globalization and Cross-Border Labor Solidarity in the Americas: The Anti-Sweatshop Movement and the Struggle (Routledge, 2005) by Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval, University of California, Santa Barbara

One of the first in-depth, comparative studies on the contemporary anti-sweatshop movement, the book examines four case studies of cross-border labor solidarity campaigns involving Central American garment workers, social justice activists, and non-government organizations. Within these campaigns, wages and working conditions sometimes improved, but these gains were not broadened or sustained over time. The book examines why these various outcomes occurred and concludes with some suggestions for addressing and potentially overcoming some of the obstacles that the contemporary anti-sweatshop movement currently faces.

Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness (Roman & Littlefield, 2004) by Melanie E. L. Bush; foreword by Joe R. Feagin

Examining the contemporary white experience, *BREAKING THE CODE OF GOOD INTENTIONS* examines why most white people in the United States believe we have achieved racial equality, even though social and economic indicators suggest otherwise. Drawing on systematic research conducted at the largest urban public university in the country, Melanie Bush explores white students' perceptions about identity, privilege, democracy, and inter-group relations.

Framed within an analysis of economic and political transitions that have occurred within the United States and globally in the second half of the twentieth century, the author examines the shift in public opinion from a presumption of collective responsibility for the common good, toward a belief in the social survival of the fittest.

Concluding with recommendations for academia and society at large, the author contends that the time is overdue for the dismantling of narratives that align ordinary whites with global elites. Indeed, she argues, the very future of humanity depends on challenging this persistent pattern.

The Downing Street Memo-Why It's Important

Andrew Austin, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

Before the war, President Bush gave two reasons for attacking Iraq. First, Iraq was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Second, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was an ally of al Qaeda terrorists, who had allegedly attacked the US on September 11, 2001. The president insisted that these facts presented an imminent threat to national security. A chorus of hawks warned that Saddam might provide terrorists with WMD. He therefore had to be disarmed or removed.

These reasons were outlined in the congressional resolution, "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq," which sanctioned armed force if the president determined within 48 hours of military action two things: (1) the US could not achieve the goals of disarming Iraq and protecting national security by "diplomatic or other peaceful means alone" and (2) war was "consistent with the United States and other countries continuing to take the necessary actions against international terrorist and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations, or persons who planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorist attacks," that occurred on 9/11, 2001.

On October 16, 2002, the resolution passed by wide margins in the Senate (77-23) and the House (296-133). Thus, a majority of elected representatives in Congress, drawn from both major political parties, expressed their belief that the reasons for military action against Iraq given by President Bush were valid and sound. In a signed letter to Congress dated March 18, 2003, the president restated verbatim and without justification of the conditions

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*The Downing Street Memo-Why It's Important
(Continued from page 19)*

outlined in the October resolution. That evening, in a televised address, he gave Saddam 48 hours to leave Iraq and warned Iraqis, "Do not destroy oil wells." Two days later, US warplanes began pounding Baghdad. Iraqi military forces were defeated in a matter of weeks and on May 1, 2003 the president proclaimed victory.

However, US officials failed in the aftermath of the invasion to find either weapons of mass destruction or ties to al Qaeda. Indeed, all the evidence the White House presented to the American public and Congress was false. How was it possible that the president took the nation to war based on completely erroneous information?

Bush pointed the finger of blame at the intelligence community. It was an "intelligence failure." Having constructed a scapegoat, Republicans and their Democratic allies collected the various intelligence agencies together under the National Intelligence Director, a cabinet-level post currently held by John Negroponte, relieving the director of the Central Intelligence Agency of his duties as the president's senior intelligence advisor and head of the intelligence community. Bush had accomplished something quite profound: he had thoroughly politicized the intelligence community.

But was the Iraq war a failure of intelligence?

On May 1, 2005, The Sunday Times of London published the Downing Street Memorandum, the minutes of a July 23, 2002 meeting between British national security officials and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair. Marked "Secret and strictly personal-UK eyes only," the minutes concern the observations of then director of MI6 (the US equivalent of the CIA), Richard Dearlove, who had just returned from Washington DC after meeting with US

intelligence officials. He told Blair that Bush had already made the decision to go to war and that military action would be "justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD." He reported, "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

Two days earlier, Blair's cabinet met to discuss how they might justify war. Minutes from the meeting reveal that Blair argued for war on the grounds of regime change; however, members of the cabinet were skeptical of this rationale. "Regime change per se is not a proper basis for military action under international law," they advised. Officials suggested that the government might manufacture "conditions necessary to justify government military action, which might include an ultimatum for the return of UN weapons inspectors to Iraq." They noted that Bush also lacked "a political framework" for military action. The minutes record that Blair had already agreed to support war in a meeting with Bush in Crawford, Texas on April 2002.

On March 25, 2002, in a memorandum from British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw to Blair, Straw complained that the president's "axis of evil" speech had made the case for attacking Iraq much harder and that Blair would need to find a way "to delink the three, and to show why military action against Iraq is so much more justified than against Iran and North Korea." Moreover, Straw pointed out, "there has been no credible evidence to link Iraq with UBL and Al Qaida. Objectively, the threat from Iraq has not worsened as a result of 11 September."

Several other top-level British government memoranda preceded these memos. These expressed great doubt that anything new with respect to Iraq had emerged sufficient to justify war. Blair's political director Peter Ricketts wrote on March 22, 2002 that "the best survey of Iraq's WMD programmes will not show

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*The Downing Street Memo-Why It's Important
(Continued from page 20)*

much advance in recent years" and that "US scrambling to establish a link between Iraq and Al Qaida is so far frankly unconvincing." He characterized the war as "a grudge between Bush and Saddam." In a memo dated March 18, 2002, British Ambassador to the US Christopher Meyer recounts a meeting with Paul Wolfowitz in which the difficulty of selling the war to the UK and in Europe was lamented. In a March 12, 2002 memo, in a conversation between Condoleezza Rice and British foreign policy advisor David Manning, it was noted that the US president was struggling to come up with a justification for war.

What we learn from these documents helps us explain comments made by then-Secretary of State Colin Powell on February 24, 2001 in Cairo, Egypt. Saddam "has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction," Powell said. "He is unable to project conventional power against his neighbors." Then-National Security Advisor, Rice, appearing on CNN July 29, 2001, reinforced Powell's claims: "We are able to keep arms from him. His military forces have not been rebuilt." Yet, in August 2002, White House officials were claiming that Saddam was a threat to international peace and security. Vice-president Cheney claimed, "there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." And in February 2003, Powell said, "We know that Saddam Hussein is determined to keep his weapons of mass destruction, is determined to make more."

What changed between the winter of 2002 and the summer of 2002? WMD had become Bush's excuse to wage war against Iraq—a war, journalist and Bush's ghostwriter Mickey Herskowitz reveals, Bush had long wanted. "One of the keys to being seen as a great leader is to be seen as a commander-in-chief," Bush said to

Herskowitz in 1999. "My father had all this political capital built up when he drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait and he wasted it." He assured Herskowitz that "if I had that much capital, I'm not going to waste it."

Thus these memos provide compelling evidence for what many observers have long claimed, namely that the president was lying both about reasons the US went to war and the facts surrounding those reasons. Bush and Blair had settled upon WMD knowing that the evidence did not support this reason, so "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy." As Wolfowitz put it in a May 28, 2003 interview with Vanity Fair, "For bureaucratic reasons, we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction [as justification for invading Iraq] because it was the one reason everyone could agree on."

Despite the many of us who knew the president was lying before the war, a majority of the American public and the Congress had faith that the evidence Bush provided to justify war in Iraq was sound. The consequences of that faith have been catastrophic. As I write this article, fighting in Iraq has killed 1,722 US service personnel, wounded 12,855, killed probably more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians, wounded tens of thousands more, and incurred hundreds of billions of dollars in military spending and property damage.

The way the White House plays with the truth reflects a governing philosophy. In an October 17, 2004 New York Times Magazine article, Ron Suskind recounts a conversation he had with a Bush aid. The aid said that individuals like Suskind lived "in what we call the reality-based community." Such individuals "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." "That's not the way the world really works anymore," the aid continued. "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality."

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The Downing Street Memo-Why It's Important
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With proper attention to these memos, it should become clear to everybody but the most ideologically deceived that president Bush took the nation to war based upon a reality that he and his operatives created-a lie to expand and entrench American Empire.



**Research Committee on
Alienation Theory and Research RC36**
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Call for Papers

Contributions are invited the following sessions:

Session 1

Keynote Session: featuring Patricia Hill Collins
Organiser: Lauren Langman, Loyola University, USA,
LLang944@aol.com

Session 2

Marginality, sociology and the sociologist
Panel session
Organiser: Karen Halnon, Pennsylvania State University, USA, kbh4@psu.edu
This session will explore the multiple applications of marginality to sociology and the sociologist, with particular emphasis on (1) the importance, if not necessity, of marginality to the sociologist; and (2) the marginal position of sociology as a discipline.

Session 3

Ethnicity and citizenship: is alienation inevitable?
Joint session of Research Commitee on Alineation Theory and Research RC36 and Research Committe on Ethnic, Race and Minority Relations RC05
Organiser: Devorah Kalekin, University of Haifa, Israel,
dkalekin@construct.haifa.ac.il

Among the processes that signal globalization is the relentless rise in migration from periphery to center - global south to global north, east to west, as well as to 'magnet' localities in distinct areas of the world. Spurred by a need for sanctuary or by a search for personal betterment, migrants are uprooted from their native habitat and fated to live as ethnic 'others'. Access to the rights and privileges of citizenship may be denied or delayed, thus exacerbating difficulties. Papers presented in this session and the discussion will explore the extent to which structural and inter-actional experiences of alienation inevitably perpetuate otherness, and limit the possibility of minorities' realizing their full human potential.

Session 4

Alienation and labor in a post apartheid society
Organiser: Gerhard Schutte, Wisconsin University, USA, agschutte@rcn.com
Despite the promise of better opportunities, working conditions and wages, workers in post apartheid South Africa face unemployment, retrenchment and neglect in the wake of the privatization policies of the new, democratically elected government. Participants are invited to submit papers discussing the alienating experiences and effects of recent trends in the political economy of the country.

Session 5

What is to be done - And who decides?
Organiser: Knud Jensen, Danish University of Education, Denmark, knud@dpu.dk
The Role of the Middle Classes in the process of globalization. Layers of middle class play an adversarial role in local and global political processes, having impact on enclosure and exclosure, allocation of positions, processes of democratic decision making and alienation of work, the mix of public finance and private enterprises and the contemporary qualities of life.

Session 6

From wage labor to consumer culture: Alienation theory in the 21stC
Organiser: James Connor, Australian National University, james.connor@anu.edu.au
The current species-being of existence is often claimed to be an alienated one, not only in Marx's traditional conception of being estranged from the product of one's labour, but in being estranged from forming a meaningful identity in a globalised, rationalised and corporatised



world. This session seeks to re-theorise alienation and the experience of it in the 21st century by identifying the ways and means of alienation today - from work, to leisure, to consumption, to name three broad sites. Papers are sought that bring alienation theory into the global, consumerist and rationalised late-capitalist world of the present and seek to explain the position of the alienated person.

Session 7

The quality of social existence in a globalizing world

Special session on Congress theme

Organiser: James Connor, Australian National University, james.connor@anu.edu.au

Marx, first theorized alienation as a consequence of wage labor, the basis of wealth in capitalist societies. Alienation for Marx was seen in powerlessness, fragmented social ties and dehumanization. But since Marx's pioneering insights, it would seem that Rationality, the legitimating ideology of capital, meant that alienation had migrated from the factory floor to office. But further, we might also note that capitalism has evolved into a system of globalized capital largely devoted to consumerism. This session will be devoted to examining the nature of alienation in the new forms of work organizations, the forms alienation takes in third world sweat shops as well as the gated communities of the affluent first world, the alienation from Nature as seen in our ecological crisis, and diverse forms of popular culture. Finally, we might also note that the conditions of social existence today has also been seen in various attempts to overcome alienation in such diverse expressions as the Global Justice movements or new age pagan religions.