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# "To Avoid the Unimaginable": Neoliberalism and the Struggle for American Democracy Since the 1960s

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“TO AVOID THE UNIMAGINABLE”:  
NEOLIBERALISM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY  
SINCE THE 1960s

by

Dawson Barrett

A Dissertation Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
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ABSTRACT  
“TO AVOID THE UNIMAGINABLE”:  
NEOLIBERALISM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY  
SINCE THE 1960s

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Dawson Barrett

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013  
Under the Supervision of Professor Joe Austin

This study explores the structural, tactical, and strategic legacies of 1960s era activism on subsequent American social movements. Specifically, this project explains how the ascendancy of neoliberal policies on both national and global scales has dramatically shifted opportunities for social change. Case studies for these developments include Earth First! and the punk rock movement during the 1980s, the Student-Farmworker Alliance in the 1990s, and a variety of anti-war organizations in the 2000s.

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This project is dedicated to those who continue to struggle to create a better world, despite terrible odds.

If we appear to seek the unattainable, as it has been said, then let it be known that we do so to avoid the unimaginable.

- Students for a Democratic Society, 1962





INTRODUCTION:  
THE SHIFTING POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE NEOLIBERAL ERA

1960s Movement of Movements →

← Neoliberalism

1980s Direct Action Movements →

← Neoliberal Globalization

1990s Global Justice Movement →

← The War on Terror

2000s Anti-war Movement →

Under neoliberalism everything either is for sale or is plundered for profit. Public lands are looted by logging companies and corporate ranchers; politicians willingly hand the public's airwaves over to powerful broadcasters and large corporate interests without a dime going into the public trust...As markets are touted as the driving force of everyday life, big government is disparaged as either incompetent or threatening to individual freedom, suggesting that power should reside in markets and corporations rather than in governments (except for their support for corporate interests and national security) and citizens. Citizenship has increasingly become a function of consumerism and politics has been restructured as "corporations have been increasingly freed from social control through deregulation, privatization, and other neoliberal measures."

- Henry Giroux, "The Terror of Neoliberalism"<sup>1</sup>

For several weeks in February and March 2011, tens of thousands of people – more than 100,000 on peak days– marched through the streets of Madison, Wisconsin to protest the state’s new “Budget Repair” bill. Despite Governor Scott Walker’s threats to mobilize the Wisconsin National Guard, the protestors –including labor activists, teachers, students, firefighters, and police officers– maintained an around-the-clock occupation of the state’s capitol building. Concerned citizens also provided seventeen hours of public testimony on the bill and symbolically blockaded the offices of state representatives in order to keep them from voting. On February 16, forty percent of Madison’s public school teachers called in sick, forcing the district to cancel classes for the day. On February 17, as protests spread throughout the state, students at Milwaukee’s Rufus King High School organized a walkout and marched four miles to join a demonstration at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The same day, the state’s fourteen Democratic senators fled to neighboring Illinois, in order to deny a quorum. Meanwhile, solidarity demonstrations were held in every state capital in the country.<sup>2</sup>

The “Wisconsin Uprising,” widely cited as Madison’s largest protest since the Vietnam War, ultimately could not stop passage of the bill. It did, however, draw national scrutiny to the newly elected governor’s proposals. Walker had presented the bill as a necessary fix for the state’s \$100 million budget deficit – a shortfall, it turned out, that he himself had created the previous month. Included among the bill’s many inflammatory provisions were increased barriers to maintaining labor unions and the effective elimination of collective bargaining rights for hundreds of thousands of state workers. Walker’s agenda was much more extensive, however. It included handouts to energy corporations through “no-bid” contracts, decreased accountability for corporate

negligence through tort reform and the repeal of the state's Equal Pay Act, and the loosening of regulations on the state's telecommunications and high-interest loan industries. Walker also cut more than \$1 billion from the state's K-12 and university education systems, while encouraging the privatization of public education through charter schools and voucher programs.<sup>3</sup>

As this was happening, several other states, including Ohio, Indiana, and New Jersey, were also pushing legislation to undercut workers' rights. Moreover, additional new bills from Wisconsin legislators mirrored controversial immigration laws in Arizona and Alabama, as well as the "Stand Your Ground" justifiable homicide laws of states such as Florida. The parallels were not coincidences, however. All over the United States, these agenda points, and the bills that accomplished them, were being advanced by conservative think tanks like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and their backers, such as the billionaire brothers David and Charles Koch and Wisconsin's own Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.<sup>4</sup>

These policies exemplified neoliberalism, an economic and political philosophy that seeks to maximize the wealth and power of the elite. By cutting services for the poor, eliminating regulatory protections (such as labor and environmental laws), cutting taxes and other obligations for the rich, and redistributing public resources to corporations through privatization, neoliberalism attempts to reduce capitalism to an extremely raw form. This Wild West, no-holds-barred vision for society has led some to label the neoliberal end goal as a sort of "cowboy capitalism."<sup>5</sup> Another description, "casino capitalism," is even more appropriate, however, as neoliberalism ensures that the house always wins.<sup>6</sup> Its deregulatory approach is not an across-the-board elimination of

big government's rules; it is, rather, a re-purposing of the state as a tool for business but not for the citizenry.<sup>7</sup>

By the time Wisconsin residents occupied their capitol building in 2011, the neoliberal project was already several decades old. ALEC had been giving American corporations the opportunity to write their own legislation since the early 1970s and boasted a membership of more than 2,000 state legislators by 1987. David Koch, meanwhile, established the Cato Institute, a Libertarian think tank, in 1977. In 1980, he ran for vice president on a Libertarian Party platform that promised the elimination of Social Security and minimum wage laws. So while protests in Madison and elsewhere may have paralleled Vietnam War era demonstrations in their size and zeal, they occurred in vastly different contexts, separated by four decades of political struggle. This study seeks to outline some of the major clashes that were shaped by neoliberal policies in the post-1960s period.<sup>8</sup>

## RESISTANCE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In his influential work on the “weapons of the weak,” James C. Scott argues that the “parameters of resistance are...set, in part, by the institutions of repression.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, the forms that resistance to oppression takes are largely determined by the context of the struggle. For Scott, this understanding allows for a re-envisioning of the past and present that recognizes acts of rebellion almost everywhere, even when overt clashes are absent. So while open revolt by, say, slaves and peasants has been relatively rare in recorded history, subtler forms of resistance, like “foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, [and] sabotage,” have been

nearly ubiquitous.<sup>10</sup> Importantly, however, this “everyday” resistance rarely actually challenges systems of domination. Its primary purpose, rather, is to retain some level of personal dignity in circumstances in which the repercussions for open revolt are extremely severe.<sup>11</sup>

Recognizing these weapons of the weak has allowed scholars to approach histories of oppression with a much keener eye for resistance, which has in turn allowed for a less condescending view – one that recognizes the agency of the oppressed rather than simply underscoring their weakness vis-à-vis oppressors. Among the many significant applications of this lens are *Black Noise*, in which Tricia Rose examines the everyday resistance of hip hop; *To ‘Joy My Freedom*, in which Tera Hunter explores the labor struggles of Southern Black women in the aftermath of the US Civil War; and *Free Spaces*, in which Sara Evans and Harry Boyte outline the role of community meeting spaces in the formation of US social movements.<sup>12</sup>

While Scott and these other scholars focus on “everyday” resistance in the absence of open rebellion, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, in *Poor People’s Movements*, explore the circumstances in which overt protest movements emerge. They, too, find the context of the struggle to be key:

Just as quiescence is enforced by institutional life, and just as the eruption of discontent is determined by changes in institutional life, the forms of political protest are also determined by the institutional context in which people live and work.<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to common tropes, resistance is not necessarily sparked by sudden change or a decline in quality of life. After all, political instability, economic change, and social inequality have been near constants in modern human history, while revolutions have been few and far between. Furthermore, the human capacity for survival amidst suffering

has proven rather immense. In other words, the worse things get...the worse things get. Piven and Cloward contend that protest movements emerge only on the rare occasions that large numbers of people simultaneously 1) reject the legitimacy of the dominant system of control, 2) believe that a better arrangement is possible, and 3) see some hope that their actions can effect a change. To combine these observations with James C. Scott's, a major shift in both collective consciousness and political context is required to convince those with relatively little power to take the immense risks (i.e., imprisonment, beatings, death, job loss) inherent to confronting structures of power. Otherwise, though people are still likely to resist authority, they will do so in a less confrontational, and thus less dangerous, manner.

Long-time activist Tom Hayden explores these issues on an even larger scale, providing a model that frames clashes between movements and centers of power. Drawing on historical examples, Hayden argues that successful social movements typically follow the same basic dialectical pattern. Emerging from the margins, movements grow until they enter the mainstream and clash with elites and their representatives. Over time, both movements and elite power brokers (whom Hayden calls the "Machiavellians") split into respective militant and moderate wings. Often, the moderates of both sides are able to reach agreement on a number of reforms that address the movement's grievances. These reforms, such as new laws or policy changes, are both real gains for the movement and attempts by elites to halt the movement's momentum. At this point, movements tend to claim victory and slowly de-mobilize, while elites, led by their militant wing, begin forming a counter-movement to dampen the impact of the

reforms and re-take lost ground. Meanwhile, both sides continue to fight over the historical legacy of the struggle, via museums, monuments, and history books.<sup>14</sup>

Using this model, Hayden presents a narrative of on-going struggle between those with power –wealth, force, or both– and those whose primary advantage is their strength in numbers. Regardless of the choice of terms, whether “Right vs. Left,” “the oppressed vs. the oppressors,” or Hayden’s “movements vs. Machiavellians,” these conflicts are between, on the one side, powerful elites (and the structures they use to maintain their power), and on the other, the “weak.” This same basic framework can be applied whether structural inequality is rooted in race, gender, sexuality, economic class, or, as is often the case, a complex combination that includes all of them.<sup>15</sup>

With Scott, Piven, and Hayden in mind, the history of the United States can be understood as a history of conflict, along many overlapping, and often contradictory, axes. The struggle for workers’ rights, for example –a fight for, among other things, a living wage, safe working conditions, and some level of input into the decisions that affect one’s employment– has undergone several phases. During the 1930s, the labor movement, including organized masses of the unemployed, was able to compel President Franklin D. Roosevelt to implement the New Deal, a series of reforms that included minimum wage laws, maximum hour protections, bans on child labor, and the legal right to join a labor union. Even before the Great Depression, however, these very reforms had already been won and lost many times by social justice activists and movements of mine workers, railroad workers, domestic workers, dockworkers, and factory workers, among others. Labor activists used strikes, factory occupations, mass protests, and pickets to apply economic pressure on their employers. Business owners, however, because of their



positions of power, had different methods at their disposal. They used political influence to eliminate laws that protected workers and to make labor organizing more difficult. They closed and moved their factories to undercut organizing drives. They hired police and private security to attack workers, for example, in the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, the Ludlow Massacre of 1914, and the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937, among countless similar clashes. After both World War I and World War II, they also elicited the help of the federal government in gutting the labor movement by harassing, imprisoning, and deporting thousands of people under the banner of anti-communism. Since the New Deal, laws such as the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act –and Wisconsin’s 2011 “Budget Repair” bill– have steadily weakened the rights of workers, while the globalization of manufacturing has led to a purging of unionized production jobs.

Other American struggles, including those for the rights of immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, and gays and lesbians, have followed a similar pattern, with each side attempting to outflank the other. The feminist struggle –the fight for legal, political, social, and economic equality for women– is particularly illustrative. In 1920, the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment granted many American women the right to vote, but only after more than seventy years of agitation, including state and national-level campaigns, parades, mass protests, pickets, civil disobedience, and hunger strikes. In the 1960s and 1970s, a second wave of feminist activists won a series of additional reforms that gave women some level of control over their bodies through access to birth control, legal abortions, domestic violence shelters, welfare funds, and laws against rape and sexual harassment. By the late 1970s, however, many of these gains were already being rolled back. The very words “abortion” and “welfare” became pejorative, and the idea

that the US Constitution should outlaw sexual discrimination was decried as a Leftwing conspiracy.

Despite the back-and-forth appearance of social movements' gains and losses, however, the common political analogy of a swinging pendulum is not appropriate. These struggles are not right to left, but rather top to bottom. The two sides are not on equal footing. Even at the height of its political clout, the American labor movement was in a position to negotiate some key concessions, but not dictate overall terms. American economic elites were not forced from their positions of power. Likewise, the substantial gains of several generations of feminists forced changes to American patriarchy (the system of male supremacy) but not its collapse. The pendulum analogy does not work because it implies an equal swing, when in fact the center is consistently skewed to one side. Moreover, such a view of history implies repetition, when in fact the terms of these struggles are constantly changing, with substantive effects for each side. In the context of the present day United States, employers can still push for anti-worker legislation, but they typically cannot rely on police to shoot striking workers, as they did in Chicago on Memorial Day in 1937. Instead, they are limited to means that do not publicly violate societal norms, in this case the generally accepted legitimacy of non-violent protest. Likewise, workers cannot pressure their employers using the popular practices of the 1930s, as the globalization of production has made disrupting the assembly line a much more difficult task. The occupation of a factory or warehouse, for example, has much less impact than it did when products were assembled, start to finish, under one roof.

## OVERVIEW

This study is primarily an examination of how shifts in political context – increased levels of cultural hostility, the likelihood of violent repression, the vulnerability of ruling parties, and changes in global economic and political conditions – both create and limit opportunities for activists. Beginning with the many American social movements of the 1960s era, this study borrows heavily from Tom Hayden’s model, particularly his notion of a perpetual struggle between movements and counter-movements. It is not a history of revolution or the pursuit of a final, utopia-creating victory. Rather, it is an attempt to provide a framework for understanding the recent history of American activism by showing 1) how economic, cultural, and political elites in the post-1960s period used specific policies to turn the tide against the movement gains of the previous decades, and 2) how those changes impacted the efforts of American activists.

To do so, I include a variety of what I believe are important, or at least illustrative, case studies and examples. However, this is not a complete history of activism in the United States, any particular movement, or even any specific activist organization. In fact, I neglect many significant actions, events, activists, organizations, and movements. Thankfully, other scholarship details some of them, and when possible, I have tried to use my notes to refer the reader to it.

Likewise, this is also not a complete political history of the post-1960s period. For reasons that will become clearer throughout this work, I delineate paradigmatic eras roughly according to dominant struggles, political policies, and Presidential administrations, namely those of the 1980s of Ronald Reagan (roughly 1975-1988), the

1990s of Bill Clinton (1988-2001), and the 2000s of George W. Bush (2001-2008). But while I refer to, say, Ronald Reagan individually, and to the specific policies of his administration, I am primarily interested in the sum total of government policies during the respective period. So, for example, I deliberately focus very little on inter-party struggles or whether specific policies are the work of the Congress or the President. In the United States, the executive has considerable powers of initiative and a veto; it seems fair to link laws and policy to the President, even if they are a group effort. To that end, for the sake of simplicity, I also focus primarily on the impacts of federal policy, even though the same dynamics were often at work at the state and local levels (as became evident in Wisconsin in 2011).

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the social movements of the 1960s, with a specific emphasis on the peculiar political context in which they operated. In the case of the Southern Civil Rights Movement, activists confronted an elaborate and repressive white supremacist regime known as “Jim Crow.” Beyond the region, additional contradictory political dynamics provided both opportunities and barriers. The Democratic Party, the party of every president from 1933 to 1969 other than Dwight Eisenhower, was simultaneously the party of the progressive New Deal and the party that dominated the American South and disenfranchised the black population. Internationally, the propaganda battles of World War II and the Cold War forced the US government to differentiate itself from its totalitarian enemies (by de-segregating the military, for example), while also providing an excuse to silence its domestic critics (as through the Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s).

Though they faced intense repression, and many activists were killed, beaten, and falsely imprisoned, the movements of this period were able to exploit weaknesses in the American power structure and force significant reforms. In addition to major cultural shifts around issues of race, gender, sexuality, and warfare, pressure on the American elite also produced a series of legal changes and policy shifts on issues such as civil rights, women's rights, and the environment.

Chapter 2 presents the first major wave of neoliberalism, as reflected in the policies of the Reagan Administration. In the early 1970s, economic elites began working in earnest to counter the movement gains of the previous decade, launching organizations such as ALEC, the Business Roundtable, and the Heritage Foundation. These groups pursued the de-regulation of industry (such as the lifting of environmental and labor standards), the privatization of government services (which allowed taxes to become a source of corporate profits), and massive government cuts in the form of tax cuts for the rich and service cuts for the poor. Throughout the decade, these groups made common cause with conservative cultural elites, such as Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority, who embraced a similar brand of Social Darwinism and also sought to turn back gains in women's and LGBT rights.

By 1980, this coalition found its champion in Ronald Reagan. President Reagan, as promised, delivered massive cuts to programs that guaranteed the rights of women and African-Americans. He also limited aid to the poor, eliminated environmental and labor regulations, and radically decreased the tax obligations of the rich. Reagan's election, however, did not just result in policy shifts. Equally as important was how Reagan implemented those changes. Many of the major reforms of the 1960s had taken the form

of federal laws and programs, and rather than battle to eliminate them in the halls of Congress, the Reagan Administration simply refused to enforce them. Reagan also appointed saboteurs to head key federal agencies. He appointed industrialists to administer environmental programs, anti-feminists to lead women's programs, and white supremacists to oversee civil rights programs. The effect of this "Reagan Method" was not only to incapacitate those elements of the federal government that oversaw human welfare, but also to render ineffective any form of progressive political lobbying. In other words, even if American social movements could pressure their representatives to pass legislation that curtailed pollution or opposed racial discrimination, Reagan's appointees were guaranteed not to enforce it.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 also show how the activists of the 1980s, with the possibility of political lobbying effectively eliminated, turned increasingly to disrupting Reagan's policies at their points of impact. While the American environmental movement had previously excelled at pressuring politicians of both major political parties, activists in groups like Earth First! and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society instead defended forests by occupying trees and blockading access roads, dismantled illegal whaling ships, and otherwise harassed both government agents and corporate polluters. By using direct action tactics, they were able to slow down, though not stop, Reagan's environmental offensive.

During the same period, cultural movements like hip hop and punk rock also emerged, primarily in urban areas where neoliberal policies had eliminated public spaces, cut recreation programs, and criminalized youthful behavior. Graffiti artists reclaimed public walls, while the DJs, rappers, and break dancers of early hip-hop turned city

streets and abandoned lots into performance spaces. Similarly, the punk movement also embraced a direct, grassroots approach, developing its own media and using abandoned warehouses and the basements of houses as show spaces. As neoliberal policies eliminated the public commons, other activist groups also embraced the tactics of re-purposing space. Critical Mass, through enormous bike rides, temporarily took city streets from cars, while Reclaim the Streets used dance parties to occupy intersections. Food Not Bombs activists, meanwhile, used public space to provide free food, often for the homeless (and were frequently arrested for doing so).<sup>16</sup>

Chapter 4 presents the second major wave of neoliberalism: globalization, through the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. While publicly less hostile on social issues than Ronald Reagan, Bush and Clinton largely continued the neoliberal economic trend. The Clinton era, for example, included substantial deregulation of American media and Wall Street speculation. The game-changer of the 1990s, however, was the acceleration of globalized neoliberalism, specifically through the establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995.

During the previous two decades, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had imposed neoliberal policies on other countries through perpetually indebting high-interest loans, the terms of which required concessions to corporate interests and cuts to social programs. NAFTA and the WTO, meanwhile, worked to facilitate the movement of global capital, in the form of investments as well as production sites. They also provided mechanisms by which global corporations could challenge and ultimately trump state and national laws.

However, more than a decade of adapting to the neoliberal assault had allowed activists to develop a repertoire of direct action tactics as well as an increasingly sophisticated post-Cold War understanding of global power structures. So while economic elites formed new institutions to further expand their power, activists responded by finding new weaknesses. For example, following the implementation of NAFTA in 1994, the indigenous rebel Zapatistas (EZLN) seceded from the Mexican state. Meanwhile, United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), an American university-based activist network, acted in solidarity with garment workers by pressuring their schools to attach labor standards to their multi-million dollar clothing contracts. Other global justice activists pursued a different strategy against globalization: mass disruption. Perhaps most famously, this included protests by environmentalists, anarchists, indigenous rights activists, labor organizers, students, and others, which literally shut down a Seattle meeting of the WTO in 1999. Since Seattle, nearly every meeting of the WTO, the Group of 8 (G8), and the World Bank has been greeted with massive protest.

Chapter 5 presents the third major wave of neoliberalism, the “War on Terror” of the Bush Administration. Many of Bush’s policies were merely extensions of the deregulation and privatization drives of the Reagan era and the globalization and “free trade” agreements of the Clinton Administration. However, following the attacks of September 11, Bush expanded neoliberalism to new levels by privatizing key defense and police services, both domestically and in US-occupied Afghanistan and Iraq. The Bush Administration further extended the reach of the WTO/IMF/World Bank system by



forcing neoliberal policies, including the privatization of state resources, the elimination of tariffs, and a “flat tax,” onto the people of Iraq by fiat.

Using the methods and organizational infrastructure of the social movements of the previous decades, the US peace movement mobilized millions of people in mass protests and disrupted political events with civil disobedience. However, the movement’s successes were limited by the extreme hostility of the political climate, the seeming invulnerability of American war profiteers, and the results of decades of de-regulation and mergers, particularly among US media corporations.

Though perhaps outwardly similar (conservative pundits often used “hippie” as a pejorative term to describe protestors in the 2000s), the movements of the 1960s and the 2000s confronted vastly different US power structures with different strengths and vulnerabilities. Much of this shift can be attributed to the rise of neoliberal policies and their divergent effects on the rich and the poor. Under the Obama Administration, covered briefly in the Epilogue, a growing movement, including the protests in Wisconsin and Occupy Wall Street (OWS), emerged to challenge neoliberalism directly. But while they operate in divergent contexts, many of the ideas and methods that have guided this modern movement –especially elements of OWS– have significant roots in the movement of movements that developed during the 1960s.

- <sup>1</sup> Henry A. Giroux, "The Terror of Neoliberalism: Rethinking the Significance of Cultural Politics," *College Literature* 32, no.1 (Winter 2005): 2.
- <sup>2</sup> Scott Bauer, "Thousands Protest Anti-Union Bill in Wisconsin," *Associated Press*, February 16, 2011; Kurt Raether, "Rufus King Students Self-Organize," *UWM Post*, February 21, 2011; Abby Sewell, "Protesters Out in Force Nationwide to Oppose Wisconsin's Anti-Union Bill," *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 2011; Lyndsey Layton, "Ralliers Welcome Back Wisconsin Democrats," *Washington Post*, March 13, 2011.
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- <sup>4</sup> Sabrina Tavernise and A.G. Sulzberger, "Thousands March on State Capitols as Union Fight Spreads," *New York Times*, February 22, 2011; Mark Niquette, "Public Worker Protests Spread from Wisconsin to Ohio," *Bloomberg*, February 18, 2011; Daniel Bice, Bill Glauber, and Ben Poston, "From Local Roots, Bradley Foundation Builds Conservative Empire," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, November 19, 2011.
- <sup>5</sup> William E. Connolly, "The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine," *Political Theory* 33, no. 6 (December 2005): 869-886.
- <sup>6</sup> Joseph M. Schwartz, "Democracy Against the Free Market: The Enron Crisis and the Politics of Global Deregulation," *Connecticut Law Review* 35:3 (Spring 2003): 1097-1123.
- <sup>7</sup> Loïc Wacquant, among others, illustrates that "de-regulation" is actually "re-regulation." Loïc Wacquant, "Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism," *Social Anthropology* 20, No. 1 (February 2012): 66-79; S.K. Vogel, *Freer Markets, More Rules: Regulatory Reform in Advanced Countries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); See also, David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- <sup>8</sup> Benjamin Hart, ed., *The Third Generation: Young Conservative Leaders Look to the Future* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Books, 1987), 144; Jane Mayer, "Covert Operations: The Billionaire Brothers Who Are Waging a War Against Obama," *New Yorker*, August 30, 2010.
- <sup>9</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 299.
- <sup>10</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, xvi.
- <sup>11</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 29-30.
- <sup>12</sup> Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Sara M. Evans and Harry Chatten Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).
- <sup>13</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 14.
- <sup>14</sup> Tom Hayden, "Ending the War in Afghanistan (Part 4)," Peace and Justice Resource Center, March 10, 2011, <http://tomhayden.com/home/ending-the-war-in-afghanistan-part-4.html> (accessed July 10, 2012); Tom Hayden, *The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama* (New York: Paradigm Publishers, 2009).
- <sup>15</sup> Much is made of the types of power at work in movements and in society, notably the differences between "power over" others and "power with" others. The intricacies of building an influential movement without becoming an oppressive force are much more important than this semantic debate implies. To be clear, I am side-stepping this particular struggle over words, but not its substance. When I refer to those with power, I am building on C. Wright Mills' concept of the "power elite." As Piven and Cloward proclaim, "Crudely but clearly stated, those who control the means of physical coercion, and those who control the means of producing wealth, have power over those who do not." The implication is not that the "weak" can have no impact on the powerful, but rather that they do not possess the same privilege and influence. Underscoring this reality is not a slight against oppressed people; it is the first step toward building a movement strategy that incorporates the advantages of mass movements in order to apply

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pressure on those with power. Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, 1; C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

<sup>16</sup> On Critical Mass, see Chris Carlsson, LisaRuth Elliott, and Adriana Camarena, ed., *Shift Happens! Critical Mass at 20* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2012). For more about Food Not Bombs, see Keith McHenry, *Hungry for Peace: How You Can Help End Poverty and War with Food Not Bombs* (Tucson, AZ: See Sharp Press, 2012).

CHAPTER 1:  
THE 1960s: A MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

← Jim Crow / New Deal / Cold War

1960s Movement of Movements →

Civil Rights Movement  
Student Movement  
Peace Movement  
Women's Movement  
Etc.

In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become a part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed. This means that we are going to have to learn to think in radical terms...It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system.

- Ella Baker, Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee<sup>1</sup>

There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious—makes you so sick at heart—that you can't take part. You can't even passively take part. And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop.

- Mario Savio, Berkeley Free Speech Movement<sup>2</sup>

Considered broadly, the many movements of the Sixties era (roughly 1955 to 1975) were a project for participatory democracy – real democracy that went beyond voting to include the right, and the ability, for regular people to shape the world in which they lived. And while the activists of these movements did not always see their common interests, they did face common opponents. For African Americans living in the South, freedom required dismantling, piece-by-piece, a system of white supremacy that maintained a racial underclass through social, economic, political, and physical control. In the urban areas of the North, meanwhile, activists confronted a system that achieved similar results through a process of ghettoization and political exclusion. As the Civil Rights struggle grew nationwide, it influenced an entire generation of “New Left” activists, who applied its values and its methods to their own surroundings. High school and college students throughout the country pushed for input into their schools’ rules, admissions policies, investments, and curriculum. Peace activists attempted to gum up the machinery of warfare. A rapidly growing environmental movement worked to protect wilderness and confront corporate polluters. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and many others also organized to make claims against the powerful.<sup>3</sup>

By challenging societal norms and confronting American power structures, these movements created a significant cultural shift. More importantly, they were also able to demand a number of substantial policy changes, new laws, and other concessions. In the process, however, many activists were beaten, murdered, or imprisoned for their actions, and by the late 1960s, American elites had substantially slowed movement progress through a combination of co-optation and repression. They had also begun organizing a massive, well-funded offensive to regain lost terrain. But while the movements of the

New Left were forced to shift to a largely defensive position after the mid-1970s, they did so with an increasingly sophisticated analysis of American power structures and oppression, as well as a number of successful organizing models.

## CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM

The movements of the 1960s had many predecessors. One significant thread was the Black Freedom struggle, which was over three centuries old by the time of the sit-ins and marches of the Civil Rights period. For 200 years, African slaves resisted American chattel slavery using whatever means they could, ranging from liberation via the Underground Railroad, to open slave revolts, to the “everyday” resistance of foot-dragging, sabotage, and false compliance. And while the slave system itself remained intact, many of its components were more fluid, as slaveholding elites were forced to respond to these constant challenges in order to maintain control. In the decades leading up to the US Civil War, the abolitionist struggle expanded to include increasing numbers of former slaves, free blacks, and white allies. As the movement grew, these activists risked, and often lost, their lives in order to further their cause. They expanded their base through anti-slavery speeches, pamphlets, and newspapers and, more importantly, they also applied political pressure, through third party elections, open rejection of slavery-defending laws (refusing to return runaway slaves, for example), and armed clashes, notably in “Bleeding” Kansas and the raid at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. Eventually, this movement succeeded in politically isolating the Southern slaveholding elite and creating a crisis out of the moral compromises that stained the US Constitution. This crisis then evolved into a war, with high casualties on both sides. Ultimately, federal forces were

victorious, at least partially due to what W.E.B. Dubois describes as a “general strike” by perhaps half a million Southern slaves.<sup>4</sup>

Though the economic and political causes of the Civil War were complex, decades of abolitionist agitation played a substantial role in framing its moral character and in shaping its conclusion. Among the anti-slavery movement’s clearest victories were three Constitutional amendments, which eliminated slavery (except as punishment for a crime), granted citizenship to former slaves, and removed racial barriers to voting. In rural areas, terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) used rape, torture, and murder to ensure that these reforms never took hold. In Southern cities, however, white supremacist violence was somewhat tempered by an on-going federal military occupation, and black activists took advantage of the opportunity to elect sympathetic politicians, establish schools, and form organizations for re-uniting families. On an individual level, African-American men and women also exercised new freedoms in the areas of employment and family life, including the right to legally recognized marriage. However, the reforms of the post-war period did not fundamentally alter the balance of power in the South, nor did they shift the worldview of many former Confederates. When federal troops abandoned the urban centers of the South in the late 1870s, they gave Southern elites carte blanche to piece together slavery’s remnants into a new system of white supremacist domination called “Jim Crow.”<sup>5</sup>

Though Jim Crow has become most well known for the segregation of schools and other facilities, it was, like chattel slavery, systematic. It included overlapping economic, physical, political, and social means of control, and it penetrated nearly every aspect of African Americans’ lives. With the restraints of the post-Civil War era lifted,

white supremacist power brokers quickly regained control of Southern state apparatuses, and they used them to maneuver around the Constitution. While the Thirteenth Amendment made outright chattel slavery illegal, Southern elites could maintain a labor force of poor black (and white) farmers through the combination of a perpetually indebted sharecropping system and under-the-table debt peonage. White elites also developed laws and other policies to bar African Americans from many occupations, and they readily took advantage of the amendment's one exception, using the slave labor of prisoners to maximize profits throughout the region. Likewise, though the Fourteenth Amendment trumped the *Dred Scott* case by making former slaves citizens by birthright, Southern elites ensured that African Americans would only be second-class citizens, forcing them to use separate, inferior facilities and display social deference. The Fifteenth Amendment, too, provided room for outmaneuvering. While black men (and, eventually, women) could not be denied the vote based on their race or previous status as slaves, they could be disenfranchised through poll taxes, literacy tests, and "whites only" primaries for the lone viable political party. Among the most clever, though ultimately unsuccessful, attempts at disenfranchisement was the infamous "grandfather clause," which, while not mentioning race or slavery, tied one's right to vote to their ancestor's.<sup>6</sup>

Jim Crow laws gave an important semblance of legitimacy to the Southern caste system, but when any of these legal acrobatics failed, white supremacists could simply resort to terrorism and brute violence, ranging from beatings to assassinations to public lynchings. In many cases, in fact, the vigilante shock troops of groups like the KKK were indistinguishable from law enforcement. In a case of societal amnesia, lynching has since become synonymous with hanging, but the actual process as it occurred in the



American South was typically much more elaborate, involving several hours of torture, mutilation, humiliation, and burning before the eventual murder – all of which took place in front of a large, cheering crowd of white men, women, and children. Photographs of these events were often then turned into postcards, while the “teeth, ears, toes, fingers, nails, kneecaps, bits of charred skin and bones” of victims were turned into souvenirs and trophies.<sup>7</sup> Estimates of the number of lynchings during this period vary, revealing the low value that was placed on specific human lives, but historians Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck estimate that “on the average, a black man, woman, or child was murdered once a week, every week, between 1882 and 1930 by a hate-driven white mob.”<sup>8</sup> Lynching and other forms of violence were used to punish those who dared to violate the racial hierarchy, but, perhaps more importantly, they also served to terrorize and traumatize the black population at large. Yet despite these dangers, Jim Crow’s grip on African Americans, like chattel slavery’s, was often challenged, including by a mass exodus to the industrial centers of the North and West during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup>

Although individual resistance to Jim Crow was ever-present, the organized opposition that led to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s had many of its roots in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was founded in 1909 by W.E.B. Dubois, anti-sweatshop crusader Florence Kelley, and anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett, among others. Though the group’s efforts included political lobbying and public protest, the NAACP, on the national level, found its greatest successes in litigation against segregation and disenfranchisement, in both the North and the South. Among the organization’s many legal victories were 1940s

rulings against white primaries and segregated interstate bus facilities, as well as the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954.<sup>10</sup>

While the NAACP diligently chipped away at the legal pillars that propped up Jim Crow, other changes in the national and global political contexts provided additional opportunities for Civil Rights activists. The social movements of the Great Depression era had compelled American elites to soften capitalism's edges by providing a basic social safety net. While negotiating the New Deal legislation, however, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used Southern blacks as a bargaining chip to gain the support of Southern politicians – just as his predecessors had during the writing of the US Constitution in 1787 and during the electoral compromise that led to federal troop withdrawals in the 1870s. But while Roosevelt's appeasement of Southern Democrats specifically excluded African Americans from many of these reforms, the broader liberal political shift did open a few avenues of change.<sup>11</sup>

These opportunities were then amplified by the onset of World War II and the subsequent Cold War, and activists pounced on them. For example, on the eve of US involvement in WWII, activists led by A. Philip Randolph threatened to organize a "March on Washington" to expose American racism. Though large protest marches often do very little to actually pressure policy makers, in this case, war propaganda depended on distinguishing the US from its Nazi counterpart, making the potential embarrassment of the march a political liability. Roosevelt was thus forced to address protestors' demands, issuing an executive order that banned racial discrimination in the wartime defense industry in exchange for canceling the march. Similarly, activists, including Randolph and the NAACP, later pressured President Harry Truman to de-segregate the

US military, also through executive order, rather than risk the embarrassment of broadcasting the issue to a global audience during the early stages of the Cold War. The activists' tactics included a picket of the 1948 Democratic National Convention.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the organizing traditions of the NAACP and A. Philip Randolph, several other trajectories within African-American resistance also built toward the clashes of the 1950s and 1960s. For example, under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) established dozens of chapters in the 1910s and 1920s. The group's membership was in the tens of thousands, while the number of sympathizers was much higher. The Nation of Islam (NOI), meanwhile, was founded in Detroit in the 1930s and steadily grew to include mosques in Chicago, Milwaukee, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Harlem, among others. Cultural resistance also emanated from Blues musicians beginning in the 1890s as well as the artists, musicians, and writers of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s. Many prominent Black artists, including actor Paul Robeson and writers Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin were also politically active.<sup>13</sup>

#### FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM

Although the widespread activism of the 1930s and 1940s created a variety of political opportunities, the Cold War also provided an excuse for elites to clamp down on labor agitators and anti-racist activists in the name of anti-communism. Under this immense political pressure, many national Civil Rights organizations followed organized labor in purging known and suspected radicals. So even as Civil Rights activists in dozens of American towns and cities were emboldened to challenge Jim Crow and its

Northern counterpart during the post-war period, they were also pressed to frame their struggle in strictly moral, not economic, terms, or else risk drawing the wrath of Red Scare headhunters. During the 1950s, however, a series of public injustices, among them the brutal murder of Emmett Till, the year-long Montgomery bus boycott, and the integration of Little Rock Central High School, brought increased exposure to the movement on a national scale. These events and campaigns built on the earlier victories of Randolph, the NAACP, and others, and subsequent movement activists, in turn, were able to use them to expand the cracks in Jim Crow.<sup>14</sup>

In 1955, white supremacists in Mississippi tortured and murdered fourteen-year-old Emmett Till. That August, the Chicago native had travelled to rural Money, Mississippi to visit relatives. Unaccustomed to the peculiar social expectations of Jim Crow, Till made the mistake of flirting with a white, female clerk at the grocery store that she owned. In response, her husband and his half-brother kidnapped Till, viciously beat him, and cut out one of his eyes, before finally killing him and dumping his body in a nearby river. Though murders of this type were not uncommon, the details of Till's death circulated nationwide, and his Chicago funeral drew thousands of infuriated mourners. His mother, Mamie Till Bradley, insisted on an open-casket funeral, and photographs of his body –badly disfigured and barely recognizable as human– ran in the *Chicago Defender* and nationally distributed *Jet* magazine.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the fact that Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam had already confessed to Till's kidnapping, an all-white Mississippi jury required very little deliberation before finding the two men not guilty. The trial, as expected, was a farce, and the two murderers subsequently sold their story, complete with unapologetic confessions, to *Look* magazine

for several thousand dollars. But while Bryant and Milam were legally protected from a new trial, a lesser justice did prevail. Without the patronage of the local black community, the Bryants' store eventually went bankrupt. Bryant and Milam's actions also helped electrify a movement to dismantle the system that had so unjustly privileged them.<sup>16</sup>

A few months after the trial, and with outrage at Till's murder as a constant motivator, civil rights organizers in Montgomery, Alabama launched a year-long boycott of city buses. Previous legal victories had already led to rulings against racial discrimination in interstate bus travel, and Montgomery provided an opportunity to challenge white supremacy at the local level. After numerous activists' attempts to provoke the Jim Crow power structure, Montgomery NAACP secretary Rosa Parks finally succeeded, by refusing to give her seat to a white passenger. Her subsequent arrest led a group called the "Women's Political Council" to call for a bus boycott, and local leaders, including E.D. Nixon of the NAACP and ministers Ralph Abernathy and 26-year-old Martin Luther King, Jr., quickly established the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to coordinate it.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of actual mechanics, the boycott's methods for transporting the city's African-American population were as mundane as carpooling, bicycling, and walking. Attacks on pedestrians, numerous arrests, and the firebombing of churches and organizers' homes, however, brought national attention to the campaign. With this attention also came funds and organizational assistance, notably from civil disobedience expert Bayard Rustin of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). White supremacist support was also mobilized, but the boycott ultimately prevailed when the Supreme Court

rejected appeals to its *Browder v. Gayle* decision, in which it ruled that Montgomery's bus policies violated the Fourteenth Amendment. After 381 days, the boycott ended, and African Americans returned to newly de-segregated city buses.<sup>18</sup>

A third event drawing national attention occurred a year later when black high school students attempted to de-segregate Little Rock Central High School, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Though the Supreme Court had previously ruled against the *de jure* segregation of schools in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, the political power of Southern whites made implementing integration nearly impossible. As the 1957 school year began, hostile white crowds arrived to block black students' admission, and Arkansas governor Orval Faubus played to his base by ordering the Arkansas National Guard to keep the students out – at gunpoint.<sup>19</sup>

As the Little Rock conflict became increasingly heated, President Dwight Eisenhower begrudgingly responded with Executive Order 10730, ordering 1,000 paratroopers of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne to escort the black students to class. Faubus and other white supremacists were not ready to relent, however, and they developed a long-term plan that eventually included cancelling the 1958 school year for Little Rock schools. The local struggle in Little Rock continued, though national media attention dissipated. Eisenhower's response to the crisis, however, had clear implications on the national level. If sufficiently pressured, the federal government could be compelled to intervene and enforce the law, which had been established and clarified by decades of NAACP campaigns.<sup>20</sup>

By the end of the 1950s, the Civil Rights Movement figured prominently in American politics, having drawn both national and international attention. Activists in

Alabama and Arkansas had built on previous movement victories, exploiting weaknesses in the Jim Crow system and pushing for the enforcement of civil rights laws. In Mississippi, Illinois, and elsewhere, media activists used previously established networks and institutions, such as black newspapers, not only to spread news of Emmett Till's murder, but also to involve Northern politicians in the outrage over his killers' trial. In the 1960s, a new generation of activists challenged Jim Crow laws directly, with non-violent civil disobedience.

### CLASHES AND REFORMS

In 1960, the Civil Rights Movement became a truly mass uprising, as direct action campaigns spread throughout the South. In February, four black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina occupied the whites-only lunch counter at Woolworth's department store, where they were refused service. The students returned for the next several days, bringing ever-larger crowds of supporters and counter-demonstrators, eventually forcing store managers to respond. Activists in other cities quickly followed suit, occupying lunch counters in their own cities and spreading boycotts of the targeted businesses. Though "sit-in" demonstrators were harassed, beaten, and spit upon in the meantime, Woolworth's agreed to de-segregate its lunch counters within six months; other businesses soon gave in as well.<sup>21</sup>

As a tactic, the "sit-in" was not new, even within the Civil Rights Movement. CORE members, for example, had been disrupting segregated facilities since the 1940s. However, direct action confrontation – direct in the sense that activists were literally doing the de-segregating through their own actions – offered new possibilities within the

context of an already focused mass media. Furthermore, those who engaged in the lunch counter sit-ins were able to force their opponents' hands by creating what George Lakey, among others, calls a "decision dilemma," a win-win situation. In this case, the gatekeepers of white supremacy were forced to either ignore activists, thus passively allowing Jim Crow standards to be violated, or forcefully remove them, providing media observers with images and stories that clearly displayed the dynamics of aggression. Crowds of white supremacists were often more than willing to play their own foil by harassing and assaulting peaceful activists – all within plain view of attentive journalists.<sup>22</sup>

In response to this outpouring of civil disobedience –much of it by young people– students and other activists formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC embraced CORE's direct action approach, and unlike the NAACP, Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and many other groups of the older generation, SNCC rejected top-down organization. Recognizing the danger and risks of their tactics, SNCC instead adopted a model that fostered mutual trust among members and democratized the group's knowledge and tasks – a crucial component given the likelihood that leaders would be jailed, hospitalized, or killed. Building on Quaker organizing traditions and most directly influenced by long-time organizer Ella Baker, SNCC adopted consensus decision-making, horizontal leadership, and a decentralized structure. Consensus, a process in which a group's decisions are discussed at length until unanimously agreed upon, forced activists to consider their plans in great depth and address as many concerns as possible. Members not only developed an understanding of what they were doing and why, they were also empowered, knowing



that their input was highly valued. Likewise, horizontal leadership, rather than making the most charismatic or experienced members serve as president and vice president, instead allowed for a large number of SNCC members to become actively involved. Lastly, by operating as a decentralized network, SNCC encouraged local initiative, assuming that activists in, say, rural Mississippi knew more about the context of their struggle than leaders in some far away headquarters.<sup>23</sup>

In 1961, on the heels of the sit-in movement, CORE activists organized the Freedom Rides – interracial, interstate bus rides through the South. The Freedom Rides were intended not only to draw attention, but also, specifically, to challenge the federal government to enforce its laws. Victories in earlier court cases had already established the illegality of segregation in interstate buses and accommodations. But while the Kennedy Administration kept a close eye on the rides, they refused to intervene to stop the brutal mob and police violence that greeted activists throughout the South. In the face of severe beatings, arrests, and the firebombing of buses, CORE withdrew from the Freedom Rides, and SNCC led the remainder of the tour in their place. Eventually, with national and international coverage of the violence becoming an embarrassment to the administration, the Kennedys finally intervened. In exchange for protection from mob violence, the administration allowed Southern police to arrest Freedom Riders at will, on illegitimate charges.<sup>24</sup>

Over the next few years, major desegregation campaigns by SNCC and the SCLC in Georgia, Maryland, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and elsewhere, as well as the 1963 March on Washington, focused additional media attention on the federal government. Feeling this pressure, the Kennedy Administration reached out to SNCC and other

organizations working in the South, encouraging them to move away from direct action and instead focus on the equally dangerous task of voter registration. This shift risked blunting the movement's disruptive successes by limiting activism to formal, "legitimate" channels. However, it also more firmly established the political, and not merely social, aspects of the civil rights struggle. From the perspective of national politics, it also served another important function.<sup>25</sup>

At least some of the federal government's hesitancy to intervene against Jim Crow was driven by the fear of electoral repercussions. Liberal Democratic leaders predicted, accurately, that the white supremacists of the essentially one-party Democratic South would retaliate against civil rights legislation by switching parties, giving the Republicans a nearly unbeatable majority for the foreseeable future. Successful voter registration campaigns, particularly given the numerical advantages of black would-be voters in many areas of the South, held the hope of at least softening the blows of such a shift. Theoretically then, the promise of African-American votes to replace white supremacist votes could embolden liberal elements of the Democratic Party to take action.

The voter registration strategy culminated in the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer, organized by a coalition that included SNCC and CORE. On SNCC's invitation, hundreds of Northern college students, many of them white, came South to assist Southern activists with movement-oriented Freedom Schools and registration for the alternative Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). Planners had hoped that the inclusion of the racially and economically more privileged Northern youth would have the strategic effect of bringing more Northern attention, and thus provide some

cover against violence. Even with outside interest, however, in just over two months, over a thousand activists were arrested, dozens more were beaten, and over fifty black churches and homes were bombed. Perhaps most notoriously, activists Michael Schwerner (age 24), James Chaney (age 21), and Andrew Goodman (age 20) disappeared that June, casting a pall over the rest of the summer. The forty-four day search for the three activists turned up the bodies of several other murdered black men and women. Eventually, the bodies of Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman were found, as well. They had been murdered in Philadelphia, Mississippi, by members of the KKK, in coordination with local police. Chaney, an African American, had also been chain whipped and mutilated before he was killed.<sup>26</sup>

At the end of the summer, delegates from the MFDP arrived at the Democratic Party's national convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, to challenge the legitimacy of state's white representatives. President Lyndon Johnson, however, balked at the opportunity to take a stand against the Mississippi Democrats. Instead of recognizing the MFDP, Johnson and other party liberals offered a compromise. They would allow two of the sixty-eight MFDP delegates to participate in at-large roles, but not as official representatives of their state. Though even this arrangement alienated Southern Democrats, it offered too little for the sacrifices of the Freedom Summer. Instead of continuing to pressure the federal government directly, SNCC activists had risked their lives to play by the establishment's rules and give the Democratic Party an opportunity to do the right thing. SNCC left the convention disillusioned with Democratic leaders and with movement elders who continued to support them. As violence against the

movement continued unabated, many young activists vowed not to make the same mistake again.<sup>27</sup>

By the mid-1960s, the Civil Rights Movement had reached a crossroads. Despite the rejection of the Atlantic City convention, pressure from the movement had forced a number of other reforms, including federal laws against poll taxes, literacy tests, and discrimination in employment. However, disappointment with the Democratic Party, the general absence of economic reforms, and the residual effects of disparities between white and black activists eventually led SNCC to abandon its organizing model for autonomous Black Power. More broadly, many young black activists began to turn away from the Gandhian approach of Dr. King, instead finding inspiration in the self-defense advocacy of Robert F. Williams and Malcolm X and the revolutionary anti-colonialism of figures like Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, and Ahmed Sékou Touré. Although the struggle in the South continued, much of the movement's momentum shifted to the urban centers of the North, where groups like the Black Panther Party confronted a different system of white supremacy.<sup>28</sup>

#### MOVEMENTS BEGET MOVEMENTS

The Civil Rights strategists of the mid-1950s to mid-1960s were particularly adept at framing their actions. Through extensive training in the tactics of non-violent civil disobedience and non-retaliation, emphasis on a conventional and formal uniform, and the selection of predictably reactionary targets, activists ensured that photographs and newsreel footage of their dangerous activities clearly displayed the oppressive nature of the Jim Crow system. This was particularly significant, as the number of American

households with a television rose from around ten percent in 1950 to nearly ninety percent by 1959. Instead of showing a two-sided battle, which could potentially invoke racial loyalties, the movement's imagery instead exposed the unmistakable dynamics of violent, angry, white supremacists attacking peaceful, well-dressed, humble activists. The disjunction between popular understandings of American freedom and this obvious oppression was jolting, and outrage at the injustices of Jim Crow resonated nationally and around the globe.<sup>29</sup>

Beyond disgust with American injustice, and inspiration from the resistance movement against it, the Southern Civil Rights Movement also had a more direct influence on subsequent movements of the era. Among the many Northern activists who were both inspired and trained by groups like SNCC were Tom Hayden of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), who drafted the *Port Huron Statement* and was later a Chicago 8 defendant; political prankster Abbie Hoffman of the Yippies; and Mario Savio, one of the leaders of the Free Speech Movement at the University of California in Berkeley. Additionally, many Northern groups, including SDS, adapted to their own struggles SNCC's participatory organizing models and direct action tactics.<sup>30</sup>

Though initially focused primarily on Civil Rights solidarity work and fundraising, SDS eventually became one of the major anti-war voices of the period. The group's decentralized structure encouraged local autonomy, and affiliates joined the network at a rapid pace. By the late 1960s, however, SDS, like much of the New Left, had all but abandoned its democratic principles in favor of an organizing model that was more hierarchical, chauvanistic, and, supposedly, efficient. The group's rising prominence also made it a magnet for infiltration by both the FBI and dogmatic Leftists,

who were intent on controlling the SDS apparatus and proving their own ideological righteousness. Under the weight of this power struggle, SDS imploded, with each faction blaming the others for the collapse.<sup>31</sup>

The anti-war movement as a whole, however, continued to grow, particularly as participation and leadership by Vietnam War veterans increased. In 1965, students and faculty at more than 100 US colleges organized the first “teach-ins” to raise awareness about the war. Protests in Washington, D.C. in April and November of that year involved around 30,000 people each. By April 1967, a New York City march drew as many 400,000, and a protest at the Pentagon that October attracted perhaps 100,000. But just as the Civil Rights struggle targeted the many components of the Jim Crow system, the anti-war movement also applied pressure at a number of points. In addition to raising awareness through teach-ins and increasingly massive public protests, anti-war activists in groups like Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (MOBE) also targeted war profiteers, like napalm producer Dow Chemical, and attempted to disrupt the flow of troops by burning draft cards, destroying draft rolls, and sheltering AWOL soldiers. By the late 1960s, the peace movement had fully entered American popular culture, having received the backing of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Muhammad Ali. Ali, the most famous athlete in the world, refused to serve in Vietnam offering to critics, “I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I’ll go to jail, so what? We’ve been in jail for 400 years.”<sup>32</sup> Discussion of the war had become so mainstream, in fact, that *Ladies’ Home Journal* famously included the following report from war correspondent Martha Gellhorn in 1967:

I had heard and read that napalm melts the flesh, and I thought that's nonsense, because I can put a roast in the oven and the fat will melt but the meat stays there. Well, I went and saw these children burned by napalm, and it's absolutely true. The chemical reaction of this napalm does melt the flesh, and the flesh runs right down their faces onto their chests...<sup>33</sup>

By 1968, the anti-war movement gained enough strength to convince President Lyndon Johnson not to seek re-election. However, even though movement moderates working “within the system” were able to garner roughly seventy percent of the 1968 primary vote for anti-war candidates, the Democratic Party instead selected Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who vowed to stay the course in Vietnam. Humphrey subsequently lost to Republican Richard Nixon, another pro-war candidate.<sup>34</sup>

But while SDS, SNCC, and their progeny had largely moved away from horizontal, consensus-based organizing by the late 1960s, the Women’s Liberation movement that emerged during the period widely embraced it. In fact, this style of internal organizing is often called the “feminist” model. Women’s Liberation borrowed heavily from the rhetoric and logic, though not the structure, of the Black Power movement. Groups like SDS, SNCC, and the Black Panthers also played another role in “Second Wave” feminism. Many feminist activists had prior experience in those organizations but had found male activists generally unreceptive to their attempts to combat sexism within the movement. An open letter from women in SDS, for example, had been roundly ridiculed at the group’s convention. However, though rarely recognized, women had actually done much of the significant organizing in these groups. It should have been of little surprise, then, that Women’s Liberation was ultimately one of the most concretely successful and dynamic movements of the period. Second Wave activists not only shifted cultural mores, they also forced legal changes, including the

elimination of marital rape exemptions in many states, and established service institutions, such as domestic violence shelters. Although the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which would have outlawed discrimination based on sex, ultimately failed, the strength of the women's movement can be partially gauged by the fact that it not only passed Congress in 1972, but was also ratified by thirty states within a year.<sup>35</sup>

Just as sexism in the New Left drove a number of women to find new organizational homes, however, feminist groups developed schisms of their own. The movement was ideologically diverse, ranging from moderate groups like the National Organization of Women (NOW) to the more radical Redstockings and New York Radical Women (NYRW). In some sense, groups like NOW anchored the women's movement by giving it mainstream legitimacy, while radical feminists pushed more moderate women to re-assess their understandings of patriarchy. However, the movement's rifts went beyond the dynamics of liberals versus radicals. Ideas about patriarchy and different feminisms evolved quickly, and movement theorists struggled to overcome many of the biases and inequalities of broader American society, particularly across lines of race, class, and sexuality. However imperfect, though, Second Wave feminists did add an additional layer of critical analysis to a broader New Left movement that was already making important connections between structural racism, imperialism, and capitalism. This lens of analysis was further expanded and critiqued during the 1970s and 1980s by Angela Y. Davis, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde, among others. One prominent scholar suggests that feminism, rather than merely combating one form of oppression, has evolved into "a constantly developing, often contested, revolutionary conversation about how all of us might envision and remake the world."<sup>36</sup>



Many other movements and organizations also emerged during the 1960s era, largely modeling themselves on other movement groups or responding to shortcomings within them. The American Indian Movement (AIM), for example, created media events and disruptions through occupations of Mount Rushmore and a replica of the *Mayflower* as well as “The Longest Walk,” a coast-to-coast march that focused attention on legislation abridging indigenous rights. The Chicano movement, the youth wing of the broader Mexican-American rights struggle, staged major student walk-outs in Los Angeles, Denver, and elsewhere, and organized within the Mexican-American community against the Vietnam War. The counter-culture, meanwhile, perhaps the most over-represented movement of the 1960s, challenged conservative sexual mores and generally opposed capitalist consumerism. Some elements of the counter-culture, including the Yippies, the Diggers, and a number of communal groups, also engaged in more directly political activities, though the distinction between the New Left and the counter-culture is an important one. The Gay and Lesbian Liberation movements struggled against repression and persecution within broader society and against homophobic elements of the counter-culture, the Women’s Liberation movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the Communist Party, and others. Meanwhile, the United Farm Workers (UFW) launched a series of strikes and grape boycotts, eventually forcing grape growers to recognize their labor rights. Many other groups also engaged in social and political struggles at various levels.<sup>37</sup>

## REPRESSION

Though this “movement of movements” created significant cultural and social changes, its record for combating economic injustices and US foreign policy is considerably less clear. Broadly speaking, as movement priorities expanded in the mid-1960s to include bolder criticism of American capitalism and imperialism, elite resistance to movements increased, and state violence and repression became more public, if not more aggressive. In the Jim Crow South, police, lynch mobs, and the KKK had served as an extralegal fail safe for white supremacist laws and policies, murdering Emmett Till, NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers, Birmingham bombing victims Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley, Freedom Summer activists Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman, and many, many others. Likewise, in the late Sixties, the “Red Squads” of Northern police departments and the FBI, specifically through its counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO), protected elite interests from perceived internal threats with an elaborate campaign of surveillance, infiltration, harassment, brutality, false imprisonment, and assassination.<sup>38</sup>

During the 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC), in a year already marked by the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, Chicago police viciously attacked protestors and several journalists, notably Dan Rather of CBS News. In the lead up to the convention, city officials had ensured a confrontation by repeatedly denying permits to protest organizers, including the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (MOBE) and the Yippies. Mayor Richard Daley had also set a precedent for police conduct several months earlier when he issued a “shoot to kill” order following King’s assassination. Although a federal investigation

after the DNC found that violence surrounding the convention was the result of a police riot, the incoming administration of Richard Nixon chose to ignore those findings and, instead, to file conspiracy charges against several New Left leaders. The “Chicago 8” defendants included Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin of the Yippies, pacifist Dave Dellinger, student anti-war leaders Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis, and Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party. The trial itself was a sham. The defendants were not allowed to present the federal government’s previous findings, and Judge Julius Hoffman denied Seale legal counsel – and had him bound and gagged for demanding it. The trial ultimately resulted in five-year prison sentences for five of the defendants, as well as stiff penalties for contempt – including sentences of four years for attorney William Kunstler and over a year for attorney Leonard Weinglass. And while these convictions were eventually overturned on appeal, federal prosecutors had removed these activists, and their supporters, from movement work in the meantime.<sup>39</sup>

State repression of activists went far beyond one trial, however. In the 1950s, the FBI developed COINTELPRO to harass and disrupt American communists, but the program expanded throughout the 1960s and 1970s to include attacks on Civil Rights organizations, peace groups, American Indian activists, and feminists, among others. In fact, during the same period in which federal officials refused to intervene to stop racist violence in the South, FBI agents were wiretapping, stalking, and threatening leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. By the end of the decade, the FBI’s tactics had become both more brazen and more sophisticated, as evidenced perhaps most notoriously in their widespread assault on the Black Panther Party. According to Manning Marable,

“In 1969 alone, 27 Black Panthers were killed by police, and 749 were jailed or arrested.”<sup>40</sup>

Two of those deaths occurred in December 1969, when Chicago police, in collusion with the FBI, assassinated Fred Hampton (age 21) and Mark Clark (age 22). After firing nearly one hundred bullets into Hampton’s apartment and then shooting him twice at close range, police claimed that they were in fact the victims, pointing to the party’s rhetoric of armed self-defense and revolutionary change as their justification. The Panthers’ insistence that the raid was a deliberate hit on Hampton was only confirmed ten years later during a civil suit. Among the details that emerged from the trial were the revelations that an FBI informant had provided police with a lay-out of Hampton’s apartment, that the FBI had been attempting for some time to provoke an attack on Hampton by rival organizations, and that the FBI had pressured the investigating attorney general to conceal their involvement by dropping charges against both the police and the Panthers who survived the raid.<sup>41</sup>

In 1970, police arrested twenty-three-year-old Panther member and Vietnam veteran Geronimo Ji Jaga (Geronimo Pratt) on charges of murdering an elementary school teacher. Ji Jaga spent twenty-seven years in prison, eight of which were in solitary confinement, before charges against him were vacated and the city of Los Angeles, along with the US Department of Justice, settled a \$4.5 million civil suit for false imprisonment. Ji Jaga had been a target of FBI counterintelligence efforts with the goal, in the words of the FBI, of “neutralizing Pratt as an effective BPP functionary.”<sup>42</sup> Though not revealed at the time, the key witness against him was a police and FBI informant.<sup>43</sup>

That same year, soldiers from the Ohio National Guard murdered Kent State University students Jeffrey Miller (age 20), Allison Krause (age 19), William Schroeder (age 19), and Sandra Scheuer (age 20), while injuring nine others. Over one million college students went on strike, shutting down 500 campuses. Fifty schools remained closed for the duration of the semester. Ten days after the Kent State shootings, police in Jackson, Mississippi murdered Jackson State College students James Earl Green (age 17) and Phillip Gibbs (age 21), and wounded twelve others.<sup>44</sup>

In 1971, guards at California's San Quentin prison killed inmate and Black Panther leader George Jackson, purportedly during an escape attempt. Jackson, twenty-nine years old, had become a public figure after the publishing of his letters from prison, where he had been for ten years, despite an initial sentence of just one year. A month after Jackson's murder, inmates at Attica prison in New York seized the jail and took thirty-three staff members hostage. Among their demands were minimum wage for prison labor, a healthy diet, and access to medical treatment. As negotiations broke down, state police stormed the prison, killing twenty-nine people, including ten of the hostages. Fabricated media accounts accused inmates of slitting hostages' throats, but they were actually killed by police bullets.<sup>45</sup>

While the violence against American activists during this period was not a departure from similar repression earlier in the decade, it did become increasingly public, paralleling the expansion of the Vietnam War into Laos and Cambodia. In 1971, the FBI announced the end of COINTELPRO, after activists broke into an FBI office and released secret documents about the program's activities to the public. However, a second public exposé four years later showed that the program remained active for at

least another two years. Similarly, Daniel Ellsberg's illegal release of the Pentagon Papers, also in 1971, exposed a history of government deception about the Vietnam War. The US eventually withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, but only after Watergate, yet another major scandal revealed by a federal whistle-blower, forced Nixon to resign. In the meantime, American police forces, at many levels, had sabotaged a generation of activists through illegal surveillance, beatings, trauma, imprisonment, and murder. In Vietnam, roughly 60,000 American soldiers were killed, and another 300,000 were wounded; Vietnamese casualties were much higher, including the deaths of perhaps one million combatants and four million civilians.<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

During the 1950s and 1960s, American activists created a series of national dilemmas by provoking local crises. Campaigns in places like Montgomery, Little Rock, and Greensboro not only achieved tangible local victories, they also attracted national and international supporters and pressured federal officials. And while repression was a constant, several factors, including the global dynamics of the Cold War and the liberal makeup of the US Supreme Court, allowed activists important opportunities to create change.

In addition to cultural shifts around race, gender, sexuality, and militarism, the movements of this period achieved a number of concrete political changes. Civil Rights activists effectively dismantled the Jim Crow system, piece-by-piece, city-by-city. In addition to a series of judicial victories, the movement also pressured government officials to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited racial discrimination in

public accommodations and employment; the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which eliminated poll taxes; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which eliminated voter literacy tests; and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which prohibited racial discrimination in the sale and rental of housing.

Lobbying and agitation by the Women's Liberation movement, meanwhile, led to the passage of Title X in 1970, which established federal funding for community health clinics and family planning services; Title IX in 1972, which eliminated gender-based discrimination in federally funded education; the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, which legalized a woman's right to control pregnancy; "no fault" divorce laws in many states; and the elimination of "marital rape" exemptions in many states. Feminists also pressured Congress to pass the Equal Rights Amendment and established nearly one thousand rape crisis centers in the US by the end of the 1970s.

Perhaps most successful of all, the environmental movement, which will be discussed in the next chapter, won the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, which protected over nine million acres of federal land; the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, which provided federal matching funds for large-scale rail projects; the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970; the Clean Air Act of 1970; the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972; the Endangered Species Act of 1973; the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974; the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977; and the Superfund Act of 1980.

In addition to the intrinsic significance of these reforms, activists of this period also exposed some of the weaknesses of the American power structure and developed a number of important organizational and analytical tools. Most notably, New Left groups

successfully combined decentralized, horizontal organizing with direct action disruptions. They also made many strategic, tactical, and personal blunders that, while hampering the movement at the time, have provided important cautionary lessons for later activists. However, the movement's successes also attracted brutal repression. Though terrorism by police and the FBI was only one contributing factor, by the mid-1970s, many effective organizations had been gutted of leadership or otherwise destroyed.

Although these movements' accomplishments had real effects on people's lives, they fell well short of their ultimate goals. The Civil Rights Movement did not end American white supremacy; Second Wave feminism did not end American patriarchy. New Left activists knocked down many of the pillars that held up these systems of oppression, but new pillars were developed to take their place. Whereas Jim Crow had suppressed African-American voters through white primaries and poll taxes, a new system was developed to accomplish this task through mass incarceration, the disenfranchisement of felons, and racially discriminatory redistricting. At the same time, "white flight" and anti-busing campaigns ensured the re-segregation, or continued segregation, of many American schools. Likewise, while the Women's Liberation movement established a litany of reforms establishing women's economic and educational rights as well as control over their reproductive functions, many of them were repealed during the massive backlash of the following decades. The movements of the New Left presented a broad, offensive push for equality, democracy, and social justice. Eventually, though, these movements either de-mobilized, or were crushed, and the American elite, who had seen their power challenged and diminished, began mobilizing to re-take what they had lost.<sup>47</sup>



In many ways, the battles of the Sixties era are still being fought. Because issues of discrimination, poverty, and imperialism remain unresolved in American society, the role of social justice movements in our historical memory is also nebulous. Perhaps most notably, the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a symbol of the Civil Rights Movement, has been hollowed out and watered down to the point of near meaninglessness. King is no longer the champion of the poor, who called the United States “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world”<sup>48</sup> and was hounded, threatened, spied upon, and arrested by local, state, and federal government officials. Instead, his legacy has been co-opted, without irony or shame, by, among others, right-wing pundit Glenn Beck, who hosted a conservative rally at the Lincoln Memorial on the anniversary of King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, and conservative Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne, who cited King as his inspiration for banning social justice-oriented ethnic studies programs in his state.<sup>49</sup>

This diluted version of King has become a useful tool for those who continue to oppose the goals for which he fought and died. They have just as easily distorted the legacies of Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party, and others, presenting them as their opposites, as champions of racism and violence. Similarly, the New Left and the hippie counter-culture have become not only interchangeable but also reviled for being so naïve and silly as to believe in sexual freedom and to oppose both mass consumption and genocidal warfare. Importantly, these false narratives and historical distortions are not merely the passive result of time or cultural change. They have been, and continue to be, deliberately communicated by the same forces that fought against these movements at the time. They are, in fact, the latest battles in the struggle for public memory.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Cohen, *Freedom's Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 327.

<sup>3</sup> The wealth of scholarship on the movements of the 1960s era is immense. Much of the key research is outlined in Van Gosse's 2002 historiographical essay, "A Movement of Movements," though important new work on this period has appeared more recently (for example, the Polletta, Smith, Sugrue, and Brown-Nagin pieces cited in the chapter). I am content to merely frame that work, rather than add to it. For while the struggles of the 1960s rightly retain a valued place in American popular understandings of democracy and activism, their prominence has also often served as a distraction from the important clashes that followed them. It is my hope that this chapter presents a useful, albeit oversimplified, overview of the 1960s, so that the reader may consider the lessons of the period in light of the political shifts of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s introduced in subsequent chapters. Van Gosse, "A Movement of Movements: The Definition and Periodization of the New Left," in *A Companion to Post-1945 American History*, ed. Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 277-302.

<sup>4</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943); Rebecca N. Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 27-68; Herbert Aptheker, *To Be Free* (New York: Carol Publishing, 1991), 11-135; W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 67.

<sup>5</sup> In terms of complexity, consider, for example, that while slavery was outlawed in the North, New York merchants profited greatly both from slave-produced goods and from the international slave trade. Alan Singer, "Nineteenth-Century New York's Complicity with Slavery," in *Redress for Historical Injustices in the United States*, ed. Michael T. Martin and Marilyn Yaquinto (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 275-293. On the post-war struggle, see Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Random House, 2006); Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998); Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Aptheker, *To Be Free*, 136-162.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas Blackmon, for example, shows how Southern convict leasing programs produced "hundreds upon hundreds of... graves" as well as huge profits for U.S. Steel. Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 3; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 222-229.

<sup>7</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 286.

<sup>8</sup> Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), ix.

<sup>9</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 280-325; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 130-144. See also, Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: The New Press, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91:4 (March 2005), 1240-1243.

<sup>12</sup> William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955), 204-210; Mary G. Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 41-180; Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1990* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1991), 12-37.

- <sup>15</sup> Stephen Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 15-31.
- <sup>16</sup> Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta*, 33-69.
- <sup>17</sup> Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 40-62.
- <sup>18</sup> Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 40-62; For more on the significance of Bayard Rustin, see John D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004); Daniel Levine, *Bayard Rustin and the Civil Rights Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000). On organized white resistance to the movement, see Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-1964* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Anders Walker, *The Ghosts of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Used Brown v. Board of Education to Stall Civil Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- <sup>19</sup> John A. Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2002).
- <sup>20</sup> Among the many now iconic images of this stand-off are *LIFE* magazine's Francis Miller's photographs of Faubus supporters carrying signs that read "Save Our Constitution," "Save Our Christian American," and "Race Mixing is Communism." See also, Karen Anderson, *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- <sup>21</sup> Martin Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1963).
- <sup>22</sup> Martin Oppenheimer and George Lakey, *A Manual for Direct Action* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1964). For more on dilemmas, see George Lakey, *Strategy for a Living Revolution* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973); Joshua Kahn Russell and Andrew Boyd, "Put Your Target in a Decision Dilemma," in *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution*, ed. Andrew Boyd (New York: O/R Books, 2012), 166-167. While some Southern authorities eventually became more strategic and media savvy, others, like Birmingham Safety Commissioner "Bull" Connor, could be depended upon for their outrageous behavior. Connor's decision to attack demonstrators, including children, with police dogs and fire hoses in 1963, for example, produced some of the most iconic and disturbing images of the period.
- <sup>23</sup> Francesca Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 39, 47-48; Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 19-30; Wesley Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
- <sup>24</sup> Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Carson, *In Struggle*, 31-38.
- <sup>25</sup> Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting*, 58-59; Carson, *In Struggle*, 38-39.
- <sup>26</sup> John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 242-271; Carson, *In Struggle*, 114-115; Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 66-115; Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- <sup>27</sup> Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*; Allen J. Matusow, "From Civil Rights to Black Power: The Case of SNCC, 1960-1966," in *Twentieth-Century America: Recent Interpretations*, ed. Barton J. Bernstein and Allen J. Matusow (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1969), 503-505; McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, 117-121.
- <sup>28</sup> As Thomas Sugrue illustrates, Civil Rights clashes in the North, though often neglected in movement histories (including this one), had their own rich history. Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).
- <sup>29</sup> Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 221.
- <sup>30</sup> Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1988), 53-72; Abbie Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture* (New York: Perigree Books, 1980), 64-72; Cohen, *Freedom's Orator*, 443; Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting*, 120-148; Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart*, 133-140.
- <sup>31</sup> Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting*, 120-148; Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989); For a detailed discussion of SDS factions, see Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973); for additional information on the

infiltration and destruction of successful activist groups by dogmatic ideologues, see Craig Cox, *Storefront Revolution: Food Co-ops and the Counterculture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994) and Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and its Relation to the Policy Process*, (New York: Longman Publishing, 1975).

<sup>32</sup> Dave Zirin, *What's My Name, Fool: Sports and Resistance in the United States* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2005), 66.

<sup>33</sup> Martha Gellhorn, "Suffer the Little Children..." *Ladies' Home Journal* (January 1967).

<sup>34</sup> Simon Hall, *Rethinking the American Anti-war Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 12-53; Staughton Lynd and Michael Ferber, *The Resistance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); David Maraniss, *They Marched into Sunlight: War and Peace, Vietnam and America, October 1967* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); *Sir! No Sir!*, directed by David Zeiger, Pangea Productions, 2005; Michael Albert, *Remembering Tomorrow: From SDS to Life After Capitalism* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007), 36-42; Hayden, *Reunion*, 253-326.

<sup>35</sup> Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting*, 149-174; Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage, 1980); Mary King, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1987), 447. See also, Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 98-112; Kristin Anderson-Bricker, "'Triple Jeopardy': Black Women and the Growth of Feminist Consciousness in SNCC, 1964-1975," in *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: Contemporary African American Women's Activism*, ed. Kimberly Springer (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).

<sup>36</sup> Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking Press, 2000); Ellen Willis, *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1992); Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Wini Breines, *The Trouble Between Us: An Uneasy History of White and Black Women in the Feminist Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 137.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: New Press, 1996); Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture*; Timothy Miller, *The '60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Carlos Munoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, and Power: The Chicano Movement* (London: Verso, 1989); Terrence Kissack, "Freaking Fag Revolutionaries: New York's Gay Liberation Front, 1969-1971," *Radical History Review*, 62, 104-135; Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993); John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Marshall Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> The pre-1965 Civil Rights Movement has been widely criticized for being overly "legalistic" and failing to target issues of economic equality, though much of this criticism draws an unfair line between economic and non-economic issues. Recent work on the labor and welfare rights elements of the movement help clarify the breadth of the struggle. See, for example, Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Robert Samuel Smith, *Race, Labor, Civil Rights: Griggs v Duke Power and the Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008); Piven and Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, 264-359.

<sup>39</sup> David R. Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Hayden, *Reunion*, 339-412; Tom Hayden, *Trial* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970); Tom Hayden, *The Whole World is Watching: The Streets of Chicago, 1968* (Davis, CA: Panorama West Publishing, 1996); Hoffman, *Soon to be a Major Motion Picture*, 147-164, 186-222.

<sup>40</sup> Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion*, 109.

<sup>41</sup> Jeffrey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 2002), 85.

<sup>43</sup> Churchill and Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*; For more on the many illegal FBI and CIA actions against the Black Panther Party and other American activists, see David Cunningham, *There's Something Happening Here: The New Left, the Klan, and FBI Counterintelligence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Huey P. Newton, *War Against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America* (New York: Harlem River Press, 2000); Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> Hall, *Rethinking the American Anti-war Movement*, 45-46.

<sup>45</sup> George Jackson, *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1970); Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law*, 265-314; *The Black Power Mixtape, 1967-1975*, directed by Göran Olsson, MPI Home Video, 2011; Tom Wicker, *A Time to Die* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1975).

<sup>46</sup> Nelson Blackstock, *Cointelpro: the FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975); Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* (New York: Viking Press, 2002); "Report, U.S. Army and Marine Corps," from book published by McFarland & Company, Inc. - *Combat Operations, 1965-1973*, no date, Folder 01, Box 01, Malcolm P. East Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University; "20 Years After Victory," April 1995, Folder 14, Box 24, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 06 - Democratic Republic of Vietnam, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University. Similar estimates can be found in James Olson, ed., *Dictionary of the Vietnam War* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 67.

<sup>47</sup> Heather Ann Thompson, "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History," *Journal of American History* 97, No. 3 (December 2010): 703-734; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010); J. Morgan Kousser, *Colorblind Injustice: Minority Voting Rights and the Undoing of the Second Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion*; Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Crown, 1991).

<sup>48</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1986), 636.

<sup>49</sup> Gail Russell Chaddock, "Glenn Beck Rally: 'I Have a Dream' Theme Takes Tea Party Turn" *Christian Science Monitor*, August 28, 2010; Greta Van Susteren, "AZ School Superintendent Defends Ethnic Studies Ban," *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren*, Fox News, May 13, 2010; *Precious Knowledge*, directed by Ari Luis Palos, Dos Vatos Productions, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> See Edward P. Morgan, *What Really Happened to the 1960s: How Mass Media Culture Failed American Democracy* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 246-286; Noteworthy recent examples include the 2008 Presidential campaign, during which conservatives continually focused on Democrat Barack Obama's connection to community organizers and Sixties era anti-war activist Bill Ayers, while Republican John McCain's past, which included fierce opposition to a federal holiday honoring King, was excused. Bill O'Reilly, "Obama Chronicles: His Relationship with William Ayers," *The O'Reilly Factor*, Fox News, September 22, 2008; Saira Anees, "The Complicated History of John McCain and MLK Day," *Political Punch*, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2008/04/the-complicated/> (accessed April 7, 2012). Obama, meanwhile, took efforts to establish that he was not a "Tom Hayden Democrat," who would be automatically "suspicious of any military action." James Traub, "Is (His) Biography (Our) Destiny?" *New York Times*, November 4, 2007.

CHAPTER 2:  
NEOLIBERALISM, PART 1: THE “REAGAN METHOD”  
AND DIRECT ACTION ACTIVISM

← Reagan Administration

ALEC  
Business Roundtable  
Heritage Foundation  
Moral Majority  
Eagle Forum

1980s Direct Action Movements →

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society  
Anti-Nuke Movement  
Food Not Bombs  
Earth First!

We are different from previous generations of conservatives. We are no longer working to preserve the status quo. We are radicals, working to overturn the present power structure of this country.

- Paul Weyrich, Heritage Foundation<sup>1</sup>

Whenever we decide to go after a law, a regulation, or an agency, we must ask ourselves the following question: If we win this battle, how will it feed on itself and lead to future victories that will weaken the coalition that opposes individual liberty and strengthen those forces and ideas that favor freedom?

- Grover Norquist, Americans for Tax Reform<sup>2</sup>

While the movements of the 1960s era were largely defined by the pursuit of participatory democracy and social justice, the forces that opposed them had an altogether different understanding of freedom. Building on the ideas of capitalist economists Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and others, they sought freedom for businesses and the super rich, not freedom for the marginalized and the oppressed. Specifically, they endorsed neoliberalism, an economic philosophy that redistributed public wealth to the elite through the de-regulation of industry, privatization of public resources, and cuts to public services. In the late 1960s and 1970s, American elites began testing these methods, primarily at the state and local levels. At the same time, however, they also began building an infrastructure for capturing national political power and developing the policies that they planned to implement. These efforts culminated in the election of Ronald Reagan, who dutifully slashed away at Sixties era reforms. More importantly, Reagan also established himself as essentially unlobbyable to the interests of US social movements. As a result, American activists were not only put on the defensive, they were also denied even the minimal access to federal policymakers that they had previously enjoyed.

The strategies of the powerful New Right were rooted in re-shaping the state in order to monopolize its resources for its own benefit. The Heritage Foundation advised the incoming Reagan Administration to “use the appointment power wisely. Act promptly to fill vacancies and find persons of high quality and friendly persuasion.”<sup>3</sup>

Conservative activist Grover Norquist was even more blunt,

First, we want to remove liberal personnel from the political process. Then we want to capture those positions of power and influence for conservatives. Stalin taught the importance of this principle...He understood that personnel is policy.

With this principle in mind, conservatives must do all they can to make sure that they get jobs in Washington.<sup>4</sup>

Social movement activists of the 1980s were thus forced to rely primarily on extra-governmental methods to achieve their aims. As the Reagan Administration and its allies moved to roll back the reforms of the 1960s era, groups like the radical environmentalists Earth First! turned to widespread, strategic civil disobedience in order to disrupt the New Right's agenda and slow it down.

#### THE NEW RIGHT COUNTERMOVEMENT

In the early 1970s, America's economic elites responded to the social changes of the previous decade by consolidating their power. In 1972, corporate leaders formed the Business Roundtable, a conservative, pro-business organization with a membership consisting of over 150 CEOs of top American companies. The group's many activities included successfully lobbying against the creation of a federal Consumer Protection Agency. In 1973, politicians and business leaders came together to found the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), so that conservative government legislators could have, on hand, draft bills that had already been vetted by business interests. The same year, Paul Weyrich, Edwin Feulner, and billionaire beer mogul Joseph Coors also launched the Heritage Foundation, which soon became one of the most influential conservative think tanks in the country. In 1977, billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch launched the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank devoted to dissolving Social Security, among similar goals. In 1979, Coors and others founded the Leadership Institute, a "boot camp for young conservatives," which had trained 40,000 conservative activists by 2004. Together with the already established, and well-funded, US Chamber



of Commerce and American Enterprise Institute (AEI), these groups spent billions of dollars to finance elections, referenda, public relations campaigns, business-friendly studies, and other think tanks. Most frighteningly of all, these organizations re-appropriated much of the language that had defined the struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, including words like “freedom,” “work,” and “common sense.”<sup>5</sup>

In his 1984 expose of the institutions of the American Right, political scientist John Saloma reported that the AEI boasted an \$11.7 million per year budget, employed more than two hundred conservative scholars, and fed a constant stream of editorials to over one hundred daily newspapers across the country. The upstart Heritage Foundation, meanwhile, already had a \$10 million operating budget by the early 1980s. As Heritage member Burton Pines described the relationship between the two organizations,

AEI is like the big gun on an offshore battleship. We are the landing party. If they hadn't softened it up, we wouldn't have landed.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, the AEI's foundational work from the 1940s on, particularly in the areas of research and publishing, had created opportunities for the conservatives of the 1970s and 1980s. Pines' analogy is especially terrifying when one considers whom they are attacking, a point that the Heritage Foundation clarified in their 1980 publication *Mandate for Leadership*, a self-professed “blueprint for conservative government.”<sup>7</sup>

As these organizations established their political footing over the course of the 1970s, economic conservatives also made common cause with cultural reactionaries, such as Jerry Falwell, Anita Bryant, and Phyllis Schlafly. In 1972, the anti-feminist Schlafly, who once equated sex education classes with “in-home sales parties for abortions,” founded the group STOP ERA (which later became the Eagle Forum).<sup>8</sup> Anita Bryant meanwhile, with some assistance from Falwell, spent the late 1970s pushing anti-gay

initiatives in Florida, California, Minnesota, Kansas, and elsewhere. Bryant worried that “if gays are granted rights, next we’ll have to give rights to prostitutes and to people who sleep with St. Bernards.”<sup>9</sup> In 1974, Gilburn Durand, who had previously worked with the conservative John Birch Society, launched “Operation Avalanche,” a campaign to organize Catholic clergy to “mobilize the [country’s] 43 million Catholics into an army of pro-life political activists.”<sup>10</sup>

The religious Right’s reach was substantial, and early 1980s estimates of the weekly viewership for Falwell, Oral Roberts, and other conservative evangelists ranged from seven to ten million on the low end to as many as 115 to 130 million on the high end. Falwell alone was broadcast on 300 radio stations and 373 television channels, and his Moral Majority claimed a membership of four million people by 1981. And though Christian conservatism was not new, the anxieties that guided this particular push were based on the developments of the previous decade. Reverend Falwell, for example, was driven by twin fears of homosexuality and feminism, which he described as a “satanic attack on the home.”<sup>11</sup> Though abortion soon became the anchor in the conservative narrative about women, Falwell was clear about his broader agenda, professing, “With all my heart, I want to bury the Equal Rights Amendment once and for all in a deep, dark grave.”<sup>12</sup> Other Christian conservatives expressed similar sentiments. The Christian Right group Christian Voice, for example, offered that “America’s rapid decline as a world power is a direct result” of activism by feminists, who were “moral perverts” and “enemies of every decent society,” while one Evangelical minister counseled that “wife beating is on the rise because men are no longer leaders in their homes. I tell women they must go back home and be more submissive.”<sup>13</sup>

In truth, there was considerable overlap between economic and cultural conservatives. In addition to promoting business-friendly economic policies, the Heritage Foundation was a fierce critic of women's rights, and Heritage founder Paul Weyrich played a role in the establishment of ALEC, the Christian Voice, and Falwell's Moral Majority. Weyrich was also a guest on Pat Robertson's *700 Club* and Reverend James Baker's *Praise the Lord*. Additionally, leaders such as televangelist Falwell, former Disney pop star Bryant, and Christian Broadcasting Network mogul Pat Robertson were hardly strapped for cash.<sup>14</sup>

These groups coalesced around the neoliberal worldview. Though in many ways just a renewed belief in Social Darwinism, neoliberal capitalism as it appeared in the 1970s and 1980s was particularly noteworthy for its callousness. Neoliberals despised the New Deal safety net and the more recent Civil Rights reforms, and they began rolling them back, piece-by-piece. Neoliberal narratives further demonized the social movements of the 1930s and the 1960s eras, blaming them for American de-industrialization, inflation, and unemployment during the 1970s. The anti-feminist backlash, spreading homophobia, and "color-blind" racism that came to define 1970s and 1980s America were not merely organic cultural responses – they were developed and nurtured by well-funded conservative think tanks.<sup>15</sup>

The Right's influence at the federal level also increased substantially during this period. According to political scientists James S. Hacker and Paul Pierson,

The number of corporations with public affairs offices in Washington grew from 100 in 1968 to over 500 in 1978. In 1971, only 175 firms had registered lobbyists in Washington, but by 1982, nearly 2,500 did. The number of corporate PACs [political action committees] increased from under 300 in 1976 to over 1,200 by the middle of 1980.<sup>16</sup>

The effects of this influence were already being felt in the late 1970s, during the administration of Jimmy Carter. With the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, however, the New Right found its true champion. Reagan not only adopted more than sixty percent of the 1,270 recommendations laid out in the Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership*, he also effectively changed the rules of the political game. For unlike his predecessors, Reagan was deliberately unlobbyable, even to the most moderate of progressive voices.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1950s and 1960s, Civil Rights strategists in groups like SNCC, CORE, and Martin Luther King's SCLC operated with a clear understanding of their Cold War context. Their use of civil disobedience was not intended to change the hearts of the Bull Connors of the Jim Crow South, nor even to attract the attention of the federal government – the Kennedys were well aware of the racist violence occurring on their watch. The sit-ins, freedom rides, and marches were deliberately and strategically packaged for media consumption, intended to embarrass the United States government on a global level, giving pause to potential US allies and providing fodder for US critics. Only this pressure, not moral concerns, drove the federal government to intervene on behalf of Southern blacks. Ronald Reagan, however, made starkly clear that he would not be embarrassed by American racism, going so far as to kick off his Presidential campaign with a states' rights speech in Philadelphia, Mississippi, a town known only for the brutal 1964 murders of Civil Rights activists Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman. Reagan aide and conservative strategist Lee Atwater later explained the Republican Party's approach:

You start out in 1954 by saying, "Nigger, nigger, nigger." By 1968 you can't say "nigger"—that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing,

states' rights, and all that stuff, and you're getting so abstract. Now, you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites.... "We want to cut this," is much more abstract than even the busing thing, uh, and a hell of a lot more abstract than "Nigger, nigger."<sup>18</sup>

On Civil Rights, Reagan was as good as his word. To head the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), he appointed a fierce Affirmative Action critic, Clarence Thomas. Predictably, from 1980 to 1986, the percentage of cases that the EEOC found no cause to pursue effectively doubled, from 28.5 percent to 56.6 percent. Despite criticism from his own party, Reagan also maintained a firm commitment to the Jim Crow-like apartheid regime in South Africa, vetoing bipartisan sanctions (which were subsequently over-ridden by Congress). Reagan also promoted William Rehnquist to Supreme Court Chief Justice. Rehnquist had been a defender of the segregationist principle of "separate but equal" and had voted against eighty-two cases (out of the eighty-three he had seen) concerning the rights of women, the elderly, the disabled, and racial minorities.<sup>19</sup>

The Reagan Administration's approach to women's rights followed a similar pattern. At the urging of the Heritage Foundation, Reagan specifically targeted the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA), a program intended to promote equal education for girls. Reagan proposed a twenty-five percent budget cut his first year and complete defunding the next, though Congressional pressures eventually limited the cuts to around forty percent. In response, Reagan simply replaced WEEA field agents with anti-feminists with ties to Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum. Under the Carter Administration, women had constituted just fifteen percent of federal judicial appointments; under Reagan, they made up eight percent. Reagan further discontinued

the Coalition on Women's Appointments, the Working Group on Women and the brand new Office of Domestic Violence. Reagan was also the first president to take a public position against the Equal Rights Amendment since its Congressional approval in 1972, and it failed during his first term.<sup>20</sup>

Workers also suffered under the new regime. In addition to Reagan's famous dismissal of striking air controllers, whose union, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), had actually endorsed him, the new president also set to work turning workers' government safeguards against them. Reagan's National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) quickly reversed forty percent of the 1970s decisions that had benefited workers. His Labor Secretary, Raymond Donovan, proposed weakening child labor restrictions by opening up dangerous jobs to fourteen and fifteen year olds, raising the number of hours children could work each week, and exempting them from minimum wage restrictions. Reagan also appointed millionaire construction owner Thorne Aucher to head the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Aucher's own company had been cited with forty-eight OSHA violations.<sup>21</sup>

With many of the institutional gains of the 1960s movements in check, Reagan slashed away at social services. One attempt at savings included classifying ketchup and pickle relish as vegetable servings in food programs for twenty-six million school children. Reagan also cut federal housing spending from \$30 billion in 1981 to \$8 billion in 1986, during a decade in which between one and three million Americans became homeless. In 1982 alone, 1.25 million industrial workers were laid off, and unemployment reached eleven percent. Nonetheless, the Reagan Administration was able to find sufficient funds for the largest peace-time military spending in history –

roughly a trillion dollars in his first four years—and a massive tax cut, from seventy percent to twenty-eight percent, for the highest bracket. The after-tax profits of U.S. corporations rose during the decade from \$82.3 billion to \$229 billion, while minimum wage remained at \$3.35 per hour, a decrease given inflation.<sup>22</sup>

The Reagan Administration's approach was soberingly straightforward. In the words of Paul Weyrich, the New Right had indeed succeeded in their effort "to overturn the...power structure of this country." When politically feasible, Reagan simply eliminated or de-funded the federal agencies and programs with which he disagreed. When he could not control their funding, he ensured control of their agendas by appointing leaders who were their agencies' fiercest critics. Though charged with enforcing the nation's laws, Reagan instead chose not to implement those that went against his agenda. His administration not only gutted the social safety net, however, it also drastically narrowed the possibilities for social change.

For lack of a better term, I call this approach of eliminating, defunding, and appointing saboteur executives "the Reagan Method." However, the practice had deep roots in the conservative movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was notably used by Richard Nixon to debilitate the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The genius of the Reagan Method was that it eliminated the possibility of compromise through lobbying, and thus limited opposition movements to two options: they could remove Reagan and his ilk through electoral means or they could use direct action to confront Reagan's policies at the point of their impact. For a variety of reasons, the former proved nearly impossible. For although opinion polls throughout the 1980s showed, for example, that nearly sixty percent of Americans thought the government spent too little to

protect the environment (compared to between six and twelve percent who thought spending was too high), these views had little electoral impact. Perhaps some of this discontinuity can be explained by a 1982 study by political scientist Everett Carl Ladd, in which he concluded that while thirty-two percent of US voters were primarily influenced by a candidate's position on abortion rights, less than half as many were as driven by positions on pollution (fifteen percent) or affirmative action programs (fourteen percent). Public opinion was not the only barrier in electoral politics, however. To ensure their victories, power brokers also eliminated huge numbers of potential minority voters through systematic mass incarceration and deliberately neutralized minority votes through methods such as re-districting.<sup>23</sup>

With little hope for either effective lobbying or electoral influence, many activists opted for the last remaining viable means: confrontation through direct action. During the 1930s and 1960s, labor and civil rights activists had often used direct action disruptions to gain public sympathy and attract outside intervention. For activists opposing Reagan's policies, however, public opinion was often much less significant than the outcome of localized clashes. But just as they had in the streets of Birmingham and Chicago in the Sixties, local elites often responded to civil disobedience with the brute force. Businesses targeted by activists also developed a number of clever chilling methods, such as the strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPP), which threatened to charge activists for the costs of their campaigns, such as the cost of security or loss of profit from bad press – a potentially devastating proposition for those advocating, say, a boycott of a major company. This shift, from national politics to intense, local clashes was perhaps most clear in the area of environmental policy.<sup>24</sup>



## THE MODERN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Although as many as 20 million people participated in the first Earth Day in 1970, a major rift within the American environmental movement was already developing. On the radical end, New Left activists had long since linked environmental destruction with industry, notably through the horrors of chemical warfare. They viewed corporations (such as Dow Chemical) as the problem and thus the target for political action. The larger, more moderate environmental organizations, meanwhile, had learned different lessons over the previous decade. For one, membership in America's mainstream environmental groups had grown exponentially in a very short period. The Audobon Society, for example, nearly doubled its membership between 1962 and 1970, growing from 41,000 to 81,500. Likewise, the National Wildlife Federation grew from 271,900 in 1966 to 540,000 in 1970, while the Sierra Club's membership ballooned from a modest 20,000 in 1959 to 113,000 in 1970. More importantly, these organizations had been able to translate their increased support into political gains and were thus much more eager to work hand-in-hand with major polluters, even recruiting them to participate in Earth Day activities.<sup>25</sup>

Despite this tension, however, concern for the environment was neither controversial nor particularly partisan. In effect, administrations from Kennedy through Carter shared at least a passing concern for the environment, or, more accurately, were at least open to the growing environmental lobby. Even Richard Nixon had responded to the movement by urging and supporting a number of green policies, including the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970, the Endangered Species

Act in 1973, and regulations for clean air and drinking water. Ronald Reagan, however, shattered this consensus, and not just by removing the solar panels that Jimmy Carter had had installed on the White House.<sup>26</sup>

Reagan represented a major departure from US environmental policy. Much in the same way that he deliberately appointed anti-feminists and white supremacists to civil rights posts, Reagan called upon major industrialists to lead and gut federal environmental agencies. To head the EPA, Reagan appointed Anne Gorsuch (later Burford), a lawyer whose clients included a number of mining and agricultural interests. Gorsuch gave polluters a free pass by eliminating the agency's Office of Enforcement, and of the fifteen people she named to EPA positions, eleven had ties to the industries they were intended to regulate. As Secretary of Interior, Reagan appointed James Watt, who, along with Joseph Coors, had founded the Mountain States Legal Foundation, an organization through which corporate interests could fight environmental regulations. To head the government's surface-mining regulatory agency, Reagan selected Robert Harris, who had previously been the agency's chief opponent and the instigator of a lawsuit against it.<sup>27</sup>

Reagan's appointees quickly handcuffed the EPA, slowing to a crawl its pursuit of corporate polluters, and urged their own agencies' defunding. The budget for the EPA was cut by thirty percent, the Council on Environmental Quality's by half, and, in 1982, Reagan insisted that the United States be the only country not to sign a UN statement declaring a respect for nature. Instead, the Reagan Administration moved to "privatize" public land, offering its use to lumber, mining, and agricultural interests. In 1982, Watt announced the administration's intention to sell thirty-seven million acres of federal land,

an area roughly the size of Michigan. By September 1983, Watt had also released 1.7 million acres of wilderness from federal protection, without the required Congressional approval. The administration further proposed to double timber production from National Forests within the decade. In most cases, this deforestation amounted to a massive subsidy for lumber corporations. For example, a study of National Forests in Colorado found that timber purchases returned only thirty-five cents for every taxpayer dollar spent on its production. Furthermore, the subsidies translated to minimal consumer savings, amounting to “a discount of about \$100 on the cost of a \$75,000 wood frame house.”<sup>28</sup>

These policies were drastic, but they were as important for what they represented as for what they actually accomplished. For nearly two decades, environmental organizations had learned a particular formula for success. Rather than focus on grassroots activism, they had “professionalized” their efforts by setting up Washington, D.C. offices and focusing their funds on lobbying. Under Reagan, this strategy became a dead end, as their lobbying cries were not only drowned out by the sheer volume of corporate lobbyists, but they also now fell on deliberately deaf ears. Even pragmatists began to realize that indirect methods were reaching a dead end, and movement energy began to shift toward direct action-oriented groups like Earth First!, which formed in 1980.

With the avenues of formal politics blocked, disruptive direct action became the paradigmatic form of protest in the 1980s. For example, the Clamshell Alliance and other anti-nuclear organizations broke into testing sites and protested the building of new nuclear plants. This movement notably included a campaign against the Seabrook

Nuclear Power Plant in New Hampshire, in which as many as 4,000 people engaged in civil disobedience between 1976 to 1989. In response to Reagan's military interventions in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, the religiously rooted Sanctuary movement openly violated federal immigration law to provide asylum to refugees. On the oceans, meanwhile, Greenpeace and the more militant Sea Shepherd Conservation Society patrolled and disrupted whale hunts, in addition to intervening in nuclear weapons tests. In 1985, the French government responded to these protests by sinking Greenpeace's flagship, the *Rainbow Warrior*, while it was docked in New Zealand, murdering one member of the crew. Another outgrowth of the anti-nuke movement, Food Not Bombs, distributed free food – to protestors, at first, but eventually to the general public. By the late 1980s, Food Not Bombs activities in San Francisco were being met with severe police repression, including beatings and dozens of arrests, eventually leading the United Nations to open an investigation into possible human rights violations. The quintessential organization of the period, however, was Earth First!<sup>29</sup>

#### EARTH FIRST! AND DIRECT ACTION

Earth First! is most well-known for its direct action tactics: tree-sits, road blockades, and the sabotaging of logging equipment. These methods – direct in the sense that they literally stopped activities such as the clear-cutting of old growth forests – were adopted as a last line of defense. In fact, paralleling the posture of the Reagan Administration, Earth First! adopted the slogan “No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth.” One prominent activist, acknowledging the implications of this defensive position for the environment, has lamented that the movement's victories are all

temporary, while its failures are permanent. In other words, when ancient forests are destroyed or animals are driven to extinction, they are gone forever, yet their defense requires constant vigilance against new threats. Success then, can only be defined as a delay, not a permanent and decisive victory.

While perhaps bleak, this analysis reflects the political context in which these groups operated. In the early 1980s, the environmental movement served a defensive role, as the US government was unsympathetic and its agencies served as corporate proxies. This dynamic was not entirely new to the American Left. In many ways, it was simply a return to the unrestrained capitalism of the pre-New Deal era. Earth First! activists were acutely aware of this shift, and their literature reflected a greater influence by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century than by any specific 1960s era organization. For example, in addition to adopting the tactic of spiking trees, Earth First! also adapted the IWW's *Little Red Songbook* into a *Little Green Songbook*. Recognizing that lumber companies excelled at pitting environmentalists against loggers, Judi Bari's Humboldt County Earth First! organized as a joint IWW chapter to link the two groups. Earth First! also utilized several key New Left methods, however.<sup>30</sup>

Most clearly, on a tactical level, Earth First! was heavily anchored in non-violent civil disobedience. Tree sits, in which activists camped out in trees to prevent their cutting, and road blockades, in which activists often locked their arms and necks to heavy equipment, were essentially just sit-ins, adapted to the outdoors. On a conceptual level, there was a parallel as well. Urban scholars such as David Harvey frame capitalism itself as a battle over space, whether via global imperialism, struggles for market share, or land

speculation. For the Civil Rights Movement, these spaces of conflict included lunch counters, city buses, and streets, while for Earth First!, the space in question was often an old growth forest. And while segregated lunch counters were clearly racialized spaces, they were also economic spaces. The question was not just whether blacks and whites could sit together, but also whether the rights of businesses (in this case to deny service) would trump the rights of people (to be served). Earth First! and other radical environmentalists raised a similar question: do the rights of businesses (say, to poison local water supplies during production) trump the rights of people (to clean water)?

The more clearly Earth First! questioned the free reign of business, the easier it became for federal and local police forces to answer them. Using tactics strikingly similar to its Counter-Intelligence Program in the 1950s and 1960s, the FBI routinely targeted Earth First! activists. In the Sixties, COINTELPRO had been used to spy on, infiltrate, disrupt, and harass New Left activists – most notoriously including the false imprisonment and assassination of Black Panther leaders like Fred Hampton and Geronimo Ji Jaga (Pratt). In the mid-1970s, public outcry about COINTELPRO and the Watergate scandal led federal legislators to launch investigations into the actions of the FBI, CIA, and National Security Agency (NSA). These investigative committees, the Church Committee in the Senate and the Pike Committee in the House of Representatives, exposed a number of misdeeds, including massive CIA and FBI mail-opening programs, FBI death threats against Martin Luther King, Jr., and a CIA database of 1.5 million potentially “subversive” Americans. However, the investigators were ultimately stonewalled by the Ford Administration, including Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld and the new CIA Director, George H. W. Bush. Though President Jimmy

Carter implemented tighter controls on security agencies through an executive order, these regulations were then loosened under Reagan.<sup>31</sup>

By the late 1980s, FBI infiltrators and informers were rampant within Earth First!, numbering at least fifty. In 1989, following more than two years of encouragement and prodding by undercover agents, EF! founder Dave Foreman and four others were accused of conspiring to sabotage Arizona power lines. In their own tape-recorded conversations, FBI agents admitted that Foreman was not “an actual perpetrator” but that his imprisonment would “send a message.” The following year, a car carrying Northern California Earth First!ers Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney was blown up, shattering Bari’s pelvis. In what became a major news story, Oakland police and FBI investigators reported that Bari and Cherney had made the bomb themselves, effectively linking Earth First! with terrorism in the popular conscience. Twelve years later, and five years after Bari’s death of cancer, a federal jury exonerated Bari and Cherney and ruled that federal agents and Oakland police officers had violated their civil rights. The special agent in charge of the San Francisco FBI office during the Bari bombing was Richard W. Held, who had played a key role in the false imprisonment of Geronimo Pratt.<sup>32</sup>

## STRUCTURE AND CAMPAIGNS

Partially because activists were concerned about police provocateurs and informants, Earth First! was highly decentralized – more of a network than a formal organization. In 1982, Earth First!’s national directory included fifty-one contacts in twenty-eight states. By the end of 1988, the group boasted seventy-five local contacts and thirteen national working groups, as well as groups in thirteen other countries. Local

Earth First! affiliates communicated through updates in the *Earth First! Journal* and a variety of traveling “roadshows.” Activists also met annually at the Round River Rendezvous, a week-long retreat, skill share, and strategy session, which often culminated with protest actions in support of the regional host’s campaigns.<sup>33</sup>

Earth First!’s actions were varied. Affiliates primarily focused on issues of local importance, but they also cooperated on campaigns across geographical boundaries. For example, from 1984 to 1987, the group led a national boycott of Burger King, whose cattle imports at the time were fed on clear-cut rainforests. They also teamed with the anti-nuclear movement and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, later featured on the television program *Whale Wars*. Many of Earth First!’s opponents were corporations (notably Maxxam and related timber companies), but the group’s main targets were often government agencies, such as the US Forest Service and the US Bureau of Land Management, that were being used to further corporate ends. For while Reagan was creating the racist, sexist myth of the American welfare queen, his administration was illegally selling public land to private interests below market value and allowing cattle interests to use public land for grazing. This was not merely bad environmental policy; that might imply that ecology was of any concern. This was economic policy – “privatization” – and the irony of these corporate welfare programs was not lost on activists.<sup>34</sup>

Earth First!’s most famous campaigns involved protecting America’s few remaining old growth forests from the encroachment of real estate developers, mining companies, and timber interests. Prominent such stands included the defense of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness area in Southwestern Oregon; the Cathedral Forest, also in



Oregon; the Cabinet Mountains of Western Montana; the Rocky Mountain Front, in Montana's Glacier National Park; the Fishing Bridge area in Yellowstone National Park, Montana; the Grand Canyon in Arizona; Okanogan National Forest in Northern Washington; the Jemez Mountains in New Mexico; and the Redwood Forests of Northern California. Because they were defensive, these exhausting campaigns often lasted for several years, with periods of intense action, stalemate, and long lulls. They also frequently changed both form and venue, as the acts of clear-cutting and building logging roads were weather dependent, forcing annual winter breaks for loggers and activists alike. So while summer might be spent clashing with developers in the forest, winters provided opportunities to raise funds, reflect on failures, and strategize. One particularly illustrative campaign was the nearly twenty-year struggle to prevent the University of Arizona from building a telescope complex on the ecologically sensitive 10,700-foot peak of Mount Graham, in Arizona's Coronado National Forest.

#### “THE MOUNT GRAHAM ROLLER-COASTER”

In July 1994, after a decade-long series of protests, arrests, temporary victories, and subsequent setbacks, environmental activists won a permanent injunction against the University of Arizona until it complied with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If the University wanted to finish construction of its \$100 million telescope, it would have to do so in accordance with US law. University officials already knew that their development plans could not meet those standards, however; in fact, their own scientists had advised a less vulnerable location. But rather than conceding, University officials opted to bypass environmental

law altogether. In 1996, when President Bill Clinton signed into law a \$160 billion omnibus spending bill, he also approved a “rider,” added by Arizona Congressman Jim Kolbe, allowing the University to build its new telescope without concern for its environmental impact.<sup>35</sup>

For over ten years, Earth First! agitators and their allies had worked to prevent the University of Arizona’s Steward Observatory from building the complex through a combination of legal challenges, direct action disruptions, and pressure campaigns against the observatory’s financial backers. Earth First! in particular used whatever means were available, including putting their bodies on the line, to “wrench the system” and delay construction. In the end, however, the University and its financial partners, notably the Catholic Church, were able to trump activists through their connections with federal legislators. Environmental activists were able to slow the assault on Mount Graham, providing an opportunity for a more amenable regime to emerge, but they could not stop it indefinitely.

Earth First!’s campaign against the Mt. Graham Observatory began in the Fall of 1985 with a demonstration at a public hearing regarding the University’s proposal. A second, more theatrical protest followed in October, during which (activists dressed as) three bears, a raccoon, a mountain lion, and a spotted owl marched on the Forest Supervisor’s office to deliver their list of demands. Mt. Graham itself was already on the agenda of Arizona Earth First!, who had publicly called for its protection in a “National Forest Wilderness” proposal a year earlier. As the University of Arizona’s plan proceeded, Earth First! and a growing coalition of over thirty other organizations began publicizing the significance and fragility of the Mt. Graham ecosystem.<sup>36</sup>

A spruce fir forest in the middle of a desert, Mt. Graham is a “sky island,” a mountain with a radically different environment than the surrounding lowlands. As a result of this isolation, the area historically hosted fifteen unique species of insects, “eight plants found nowhere else, two unique snails, Peregrine Falcons (an Endangered Species), Spotted Owls,”<sup>37</sup> and, perhaps most dramatically, the Mt. Graham Red Squirrel, an Endangered Species with an estimated population between 150 and 300. Biologist Peter Warshall, one of over 200 members of Scientists for the Preservation of Mt. Graham, likened the area to only a small handful of others in the world, such as the Galapagos Islands, the Celbes of Southeast Asia, and the highlands of East Africa. In a 1990 *Washington Post* article, Arizona Game and Fish Department biologist Tom Waddell called Mt. Graham “an isolated museum of what was here 11,000 years ago.”<sup>38</sup> For these reasons, as well as the mountains’ spiritual significance for the San Carlos Apache Nation, Mt. Graham was a controversial location for the school’s telescope complex. The university itself had also identified nearly 40 other locations that could meet their needs.<sup>39</sup>

Nonetheless, school administrators continued the project as planned and hired the high-profile Washington lobbying firm Patton, Boggs, and Blow to plead their case on Capitol Hill. In 1988, initial legislative attempts by Arizona Senators John McCain and Dennis DeConcini to create an astrophysical preserve for the telescopes failed. After the Congressional recess, however, the University’s \$1 million lobbying push paid off when McCain, DeConcini, and Congressman Jim Kolbe inserted a rider to that year’s Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act, allowing the University to by-pass much of the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. In response, while other

environmental activists began mounting a legal challenge, Arizona Earth First! members Nancy Morton, Nancy Zierenberg, and Lynn Bohi occupied the Tucson office of Arizona Congressman Mo Udall, a self-professed conservationist and University of Arizona alumnus, who had refused to intervene against the rider.<sup>40</sup>

In February 1990, members of Earth First! and Greenpeace turned their focus to one of the telescope's principle backers, the Smithsonian Institute. Protestors hung a twenty-five foot banner on the front of the Museum of Natural History, displayed squirrel-sized coffins, and carried signs that read, "Extinction on Mount Graham Courtesy of the Smithsonian." A national conference on environmental law was also targeted, and its attendees returned from lunch to find Earth First! pamphlets on Mt. Graham at their place settings. All references to the Smithsonian had been circled in red. Unaccustomed to public protest, the museum withdrew from the Mt. Graham project altogether the next year, choosing instead to invest in a telescope based in Hawaii.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time that Earth First! activists were pressuring the Smithsonian, a legal challenge to the observatory led by the Sierra Club uncovered a series of government misdeeds. The complex's exemptions from environmental law were contingent on an official Biological Opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which oversaw the Endangered Species Program. But while the opinion's authors, including agency biologist Sam Spiller, had personally concluded that the project would threaten the area's wildlife, Regional Director Michael Spear had pressured them to give the project a positive endorsement.<sup>42</sup>

This embarrassing revelation led the USFWS to order a new Biological Opinion, but it did not convince the Forest Service to revoke the University's permit. A

subsequent investigation by the Congressional General Accounting Office (GAO), however, found that the development “posed an unacceptable risk to the red squirrel’s survival,”<sup>43</sup> a conclusion amplified by new data showing that the squirrel population had dropped from 215 in 1988 to as few as 132 by May 1990. This finding led to a 30-day halt to the project, but the committee in charge of reviewing biological data was headed by Michael Spear, the very person who sabotaged the first assessment. The GAO investigation also unearthed allegations that Senator John McCain had pressured Coronado National Forest Service Supervisor Jim Abbott to ensure the project’s success or else have “the shortest tenure of any Forest Service Supervisor on record.”<sup>44</sup>

But while the GAO investigation prompted widespread outcry in Congress, with McCain, DeConcini, and Arizona Congressman Jon Kyl awkwardly joining the chorus, other federal officials showed less concern. George H.W. Bush had expressed a desire to be known as the “environmental President,” but his Interior Secretary, Manuel Lujan, Jr., announced in a May 1990 interview with the *Denver Post* that the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was “too tough.” As “the best example,” Lujan cited the Mt. Graham red squirrel, and he questioned why “we have to save every subspecies,” since “nobody’s told me the difference between a red squirrel, a black one or a brown one.” In a subsequent *New York Times* editorial, Donald Falk, Executive Director for the Center for Plant Conservation, described Lujan’s statement as showing “an alarming ignorance of basic biology” for the “highest public official entrusted with the stewardship of our natural resources.” President Bush distanced himself from Lujan’s comments, but he threatened to block the ESA’s renewal just two years later.<sup>45</sup>

That September, with the review process complete and a temporary injunction lifted, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals allowed construction to begin anew. With legal options exhausted, Earth First! activists turned to more direct methods: civil disobedience and monkey wrenching. On October 2, logging and construction crews arrived to find the first two forest gates chained shut, and the crews had to use blowtorches to open them. They then found the next gate blocked by an activist, attached to it with a bicycle lock, thus requiring slow, careful removal. After clearing this hurdle, the convoy encountered an additional seven roadblocks before finally reaching the site. There, they found even more Earth First! activists chained to trees. By the time they were all cleared, the work had been delayed by eight hours. The next day, a funeral march through the forest and a tree sit prevented cutting for two hours. The third day, yet another march, followed by mass civil disobedience, resulted in a three and a half hour delay and 23 arrests.<sup>46</sup>

In the following weeks, activists mounted another gate blockade and blocked roads with logs almost daily, but they could not stop the clearing of two of the three designated areas. The third cut, however, was delayed by a weeklong tree-sit, which compelled the University to opt for an alternate location with less environmental impact. In November 1990, activists closed the Mt. Graham Preservation camp for winter, well aware that their efforts may have added up to little more than “the equivalent of hubcap theft in the face of a project which threatens a species extinction.”<sup>47</sup>

In 1991, Mt. Graham defenders focused their efforts on the telescopes’ sponsors outside of Arizona. In addition to the withdrawal of the Smithsonian Institute, the year also saw Ohio State University’s support for the project collapse. A year of student

protests had forced the Astronomy Department to hire its own PR firm, and two days after a mock funeral for Mt. Graham, the school's Board of Trustees eliminated the telescope from their agenda. By doing so, the board required the Astronomy program to seek its own funding for the telescope. Building on this victory, Ohio State actions escalated with the disruption of an on-campus speech by University of Arizona President Manual Pacheco, including a banner drop, the flyering of car windshields, and a post-speech airplane banner reading, "OSU, U of A save Apache rights and Mt. Graham." A few weeks later, multiple banner drops and 10,000 flyers greeted the arrival of the University of Arizona football team as they kicked off their season, with a 38-14 loss in Columbus. After activists, including "Ruth the Red Squirrel," began talking to media surrounding the nationally televised game, OSU officials announced that the school would not be participating in the Mt. Graham project.<sup>48</sup>

With funding from the Smithsonian and Ohio State cut off, activists focused their efforts on another major co-sponsor, the Catholic Church. In 1992, the Vatican Observatory officially responded to Apache opposition to the Mt. Graham project, which included two unanimous Tribal Council Resolutions in 1990 as well as a 1991 resolution endorsed by fifteen American Indian Nations and eleven US environmental groups. In the response, Father George Coyne, the Vatican astronomer at the University of Arizona, noted that while Apache oral traditions linked them to Mt. Graham much earlier, "there are no clear written records of any group of Apaches using Mt. Graham until the mid 1600s."<sup>49</sup> In effect, Coyne argued that violating even 400 years of tradition was insignificant compared to the interests of the Catholic Church. Indeed, Coyne later called

the native view “a kind of religiosity to which I cannot subscribe, and which must be suppressed with all the force we can muster.”<sup>50</sup>

While Father Coyne held the paternalistic view that Apache claims stemmed from environmentalists attempting to “manipulate the American Indians,”<sup>51</sup> Father Charles Polzer, another Jesuit priest and Arizona faculty member, identified a different source of opposition to the telescopes. According to Polzer, the effort to protect Mt. Graham was a conspiracy of the “Jewish lawyers of the ACLU to undermine and destroy the Catholic Church.”<sup>52</sup> But while the Vatican was unmoved by Apache concerns, environmental activists built alliances with native groups and planned solidarity actions, including a protest at the Vatican Embassy in London by Earth First! and a group calling itself “Catholics Against Vatican Exploitation of Apache Traditional Sites” in October 1992.<sup>53</sup>

In 1993 and 1994, Earth First! and its allies escalated their campaign. During the summer of 1993, the group held its annual Round River Rendezvous at Mt. Graham. Following the retreat, activists occupied the office of the University of Arizona President and were violently removed. According to the EF! version of the story, the twenty-five arrestees issued a plea of “no compromise.” That same summer, acknowledging the public relations blunder of using the telescope project to honor another defiler of indigenous land, the University changed the name of the third proposed telescope from “Columbus” to the more generic, less offensive “Large Binocular Telescope” (LBT).<sup>54</sup>

While continuing to condemn the original name, native activists refused to offer the University an opportunity for bolster its image. Ola Cassadore Davis of the Apache Survival Coalition responded bluntly,



They can name it Sally or John or whatever name they want, but we still don't want it. That mountain is our church, it's a temple, so they should leave it alone, leave it the way it is.

In September, Apache activists joined Earth First! in a protest action at the dedication of the first two telescopes. The disruptions included bicycle-lock blockades, a tripod sit, and a loud drum circle by the Arizona American Indian Movement, leading to ten arrests and delaying the ceremony for three hours. A month earlier, Colorado and Arizona EF! activists had converged on the Vatican-sponsored World Youth Day in Denver, which closed with an airplane flying over the crowd pulling a banner reading, "The Pope Sins on Mount Graham – Earth First!" Though the Church's seeming omnipresence made it very powerful, it also provided activists with many opportunities for confrontation.<sup>55</sup>

In 1994, the campaign to stop the Large Binocular Telescope reached its peak, as the project's North American backers began withdrawing one after the other. In January, student activist Naomi Mudge addressed the University of Arizona faculty senate in order to debunk recent claims by the school's Vice President. The same month, the University of Toronto, the telescope's only Canadian backer, dropped out, following a demonstration at the school's astronomy department. In February, an Earth First! climber occupied, and hung banners from, the University of Arizona's clock tower for nearly a week. Though police blew whistles and focused spotlights on the squatter to prevent him from sleeping at night, they stopped short of granting University of Arizona business major (and bigot) Greg Chapin's request "to see him beat...to see Rodney King all over."<sup>56</sup> In response to the occupation, the University threatened to file a SLAPP suit to reimburse them for police expenses as well as the cost of installing surveillance cameras on the tower.<sup>57</sup>

In March, Michigan State University responded to student protests by removing its name from consideration for the telescope. In April, Earth First!, the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC), the Apache Survival Coalition, and other groups, conducted an international “Day of Action.” Activists in more than forty cities participated, including occupations of Forest Service offices in Vermont, Minnesota, Georgia, and Oregon, as well as actions against the Archdiocese in San Francisco, California, and the Research Corporation, another telescope partner, in Tucson, Arizona. Fifty European astronomers also signed a petition against the LBT. In response to an on-campus demonstration related to the day of action, officials at the University of Pittsburgh, the last American school still considering the Mt. Graham project, also withdrew. Activist pressure on Pitt’s administration had been building for years, including a visit by San Carlos Apache Raleigh Thompson in March 1993 and a student occupation of the Chancellor’s office that December.<sup>58</sup>

On the heels of this string of victories, and after nearly ten years of legal appeals, the Ninth Circuit Court finally issued a permanent injunction against the building of the LBT, requiring the University of Arizona to comply with both the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. A year later, the Court officially denied the University’s appeal, seemingly dooming the expansion of the complex for the foreseeable future. As Mark Hughes of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund had predicted, “as soon as someone really studies the impacts of the observatory on the squirrel – and no one has done this – the project will be dead.”<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the Mt. Graham project could not proceed within the confines of the law.<sup>60</sup>

With so much money on the line, however, University of Arizona officials and their business partners refused to accept defeat. In December of 1995, President Bill Clinton vetoed an appropriations bill full of environmental exemptions, including waivers for Alaskan old growth forests, roadless areas in Montana, and Mt. Graham – a provision added by Arizona Congressman Jon Kyl. Six months later, however, the University finally succeeded in freeing itself from the responsibilities of US law. In May, President Bill Clinton signed Congress' Omnibus Budget Bill, which included a new rider exempting the University from environmental considerations. The next month, the Court implemented the rider and lifted its ban, allowing construction to proceed unhindered.<sup>61</sup>

With the legal hurdles removed, Ohio State University re-joined the project in February 1997. Two years later, Notre Dame University also signed on. In 2002, the University of Virginia and the University of Minnesota joined the project as well, despite intense protests from students, faculty, and indigenous groups. Virginia's participation was particularly biting as the Virginia Council on Indians, representing all eight of the state's tribes, had joined the Apache plea against the telescope. The faculty committee in charge of the decision recommended participation, with the condescending and contradictory caveats that the school encourage the University of Arizona to form a committee to improve relations with American Indians and that Virginia also attempt to improve its own relations with American Indian students and faculty. At a cost of over \$120 million, the Large Binocular Telescope was dedicated in 2004 and became fully operational in 2008, more than twenty years after the battle began.<sup>62</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The defense of Mt. Graham was one of dozens of campaigns by Earth First! in the 1980s and 1990s, many of them engaged simultaneously. This feat is especially impressive, given not only the frustrating nature of their activism, but also that they conducted it in the face of considerable police repression. And though its activities were widespread, Earth First! made up only a small portion of the US environmental movement. While well-funded national organizations lobbied politicians with little hope for success, EF! activists shouldered the often-dangerous responsibility of blunting the efforts of polluters and clear-cutters on the front lines. Their tactics, including civil disobedience and sabotage, were inherently defensive, however, and could only impede, not permanently stop, their opponents.

Earth First! activists and their allies did not prevent the construction of the telescope complex at Mt. Graham. However, by targeting the University of Arizona and its financial backers with a combination of legal challenges, public shaming, and direct action disruptions, they were able to slow construction dramatically. The Mt. Graham campaign, then, was not a victory, but its ultimate failure had as much to do with the American political context as with the efforts of activists. By putting their bodies on the line, radical environmentalists were largely able to preserve the forests of Mt. Graham through the destructive years of the Reagan Administration, the Bush Administration, and into the Clinton Administration. Unfortunately, neither the broader environmental movement nor the American Left as a whole had been able to turn back the gains of the New Right. They were unable to use the window that Earth First! provided in order to force a more ecologically friendly agenda at the federal level. Environmental lobbyists

did compel Democrat Bill Clinton to reject the blatant assault of the 1995 Interior appropriations bill. However, with both Congressional houses in Republican hands, there was not sufficient political pressure to make Clinton reject every bill that mentioned Mt. Graham.

While Earth First!, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, and EF! off-shoot the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) continue to operate, their most significant legacy has been at the tactical level, where they served as a bridge between 1960s guerilla theater groups and the carnival protestors of the 1990s. Earth First!'s use of theatrics borrowed heavily from earlier groups like the Yippies and the Diggers. The Yippies had been experts at using humor for political ends, reportedly dumping money onto the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange and applying for a government permit to levitate the Pentagon to purge it of its Vietnam War demons. During the conspiracy trial of the Chicago 8, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin also appeared in court in costumes, dressed as judges and Chicago police officers. Earth First!ers similarly protested in animal costumes and made appearances as Smokey the Bear in order to denounce the US Forest Service.

Many of the forest-related tactics that Earth First! eventually perfected, including tree-sits, tripod sits, and burying one's self waist deep during a road blockade, had originated in the Australian environmental movement and re-appeared in the actions of subsequent groups. For example, in the early 1990s, Reclaim the Streets, which was originally an Earth First! UK spin-off, organized a number of illegal dance parties in busy intersections, and activists suspended on tripods were a frequent staple. Earth First!'s taste for disruption and occupying space was also paralleled in the actions of the AIDS

Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and the bicycle event Critical Mass. ACT UP activists, for example, chained themselves to a balcony at the New York Stock Exchange in 1989 and interrupted the *CBS Evening News* in 1991. Perhaps most importantly, many of these tactics for blocking roads and intersections were used during the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999.<sup>63</sup>

Earth First!'s use of "monkey wrenching" also maintained a legacy among activists. In the early 1990s, after a series of organizational splits along personal and strategic lines, many Earth First!ers began distancing themselves from some forms of sabotage, particularly "tree-spiking," the driving of long nails into trees to prevent their cutting. This particular debate was rather complicated, as spiking's unwarranted reputation for being dangerous made it unappealing for public relations reasons, though not necessarily for ethical reasons. Other burgeoning organizations of the period, however, notably the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and Earth Liberation Front (ELF), continued to use property destruction as both a tactic and a strategy. The ALF, for example, conducted a series of raids on American animal testing laboratories and factory farms in the 1980s and 1990s, freeing animals, causing deliberate property damage, and successfully closing many of its targets. The ELF, meanwhile, has been implicated in a number of arsons, notably including, in 1996, \$12 million in damages to a ski resort in Vail, Colorado, which had been seeking to expand, and \$3.5 million in damages to 125 Hummers and other SUVs at a Los Angeles-area dealership in 2003. To date, neither group's actions have caused physical harm to a human being.<sup>64</sup>

Most significantly, groups like Earth First! represented a re-evaluation of the American political landscape that acknowledged new constraints and began planning for

the long term. During the 1980s, New Right activists began brainstorming ways to make the “Reagan Revolution” permanent, while also criticizing Reagan for being too moderate. Groups like Earth First!, while not providing a serious challenge to neoliberal hegemony at the federal level, blunted the impact of Reagan’s policies. By building coalitions with indigenous rights activists and other environmental groups, they also provided a foundation for a future push, under more receptive political conditions.<sup>65</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1991), 237.
- <sup>2</sup> Benjamin Hart, ed., *The Third Generation: Young Conservative Leaders Look to the Future* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Books, 1987), 157.
- <sup>3</sup> Charles L. Heatherly, ed., *Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1981), 701.
- <sup>4</sup> Hart, ed., *The Third Generation*, 160.
- <sup>5</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43-44; Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Green Revolution* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), 49; John S. Saloma III, *Ominous Politics: The New Conservative Labyrinth* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 23; Manuel G. Gonzales and Richard Delgado, *The Politics of Fear: How Republicans Use Money, Race, and the Media to Win* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 22, 29. For more on the Business Roundtable and the Chamber of Commerce in the 1970s, see Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 192-211. To give a recent number, in 2004 alone, the Chamber of Commerce spent \$24.5 million lobbying the federal government on behalf of American businesses. "Washington in Brief: Chamber Spent Record \$53 Million in Lobbying," *Washington Post*, February 15, 2005.
- <sup>6</sup> Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, 14.
- <sup>7</sup> Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, 8, 14, 15. The 1,093 page *Mandate for Leadership* provides a step-by-step guide for applying neoliberal principles to dozens of federal agencies, ranging from the Departments of Education, Energy, Labor, and Justice to regulatory agencies such as the Federal Communications Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency, Heatherly, ed., *Mandate for Leadership*.
- <sup>8</sup> Though the exact source of this quote is unclear, several people trace it to Schlafly's *Eagle Forum* column; Frank Rich, *New York Times*, February 12, 1997.
- <sup>9</sup> Anita Bryant and Bob Green, *At Any Cost* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1978).
- <sup>10</sup> Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, 53; David Farber, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short Story* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 119-157.
- <sup>11</sup> Faludi, *Backlash*, 244.
- <sup>12</sup> Faludi, *Backlash*, 232.
- <sup>13</sup> Gonzales and Delgado, *The Politics of Fear*, 8; Faludi, *Backlash*, 232-233. Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, 52. The Reverend Pat Roberston, host of the *700 Club* and founder of the Christian Coalition, best summed up this position in a 1992 fund-raising letter, "The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." "Equal Rights Initiative in Iowa Attacked," *Washington Post*, August 23, 1992.
- <sup>14</sup> Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, 56.
- <sup>15</sup> For example, see Edward Morgan's discussion of "political correctness," post-feminism, and racial meritocracy; Edward P. Morgan, *What Really Happened to the 1960s: How Mass Media Culture Failed American Democracy* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 294-305.
- <sup>16</sup> Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 118.
- <sup>17</sup> Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, 128-132; Saloma, *Ominous Politics*, 15-16.
- <sup>18</sup> Jere Nash, Andy Taggart, and John Grisham, *Mississippi Politics: The Struggle for Power* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 117-120; Lee Atwater, see Rick Perlstein, "Exclusive: Lee Atwater's Infamous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy," *Nation*, November 13, 2012, <http://www.thenation.com/article/170841/exclusive-lee-atwaters-infamous-1981-interview-southern-strategy> (accessed November 27, 2012). Thank you to my friend John Terry for bringing the Atwater interview to my attention.
- <sup>19</sup> Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 179, 195, 196. For more on Reagan's Supreme Court appointments, see Scott A. Merriman, "The 'Real' Right Turn: The Reagan Supreme Court" and Robert P. Weiss, "Privatizing the Leviathan State: A 'Reaganomic' Legacy," both in *The 1980s: A Critical and Transitional Decade*, ed. Kimberly R. Moffitt and Duncan A. Campbell (New York: Lexington Books, 2011), 65-87, 90-92.
- <sup>20</sup> Faludi, *Backlash*, xix, 257, 259-262



- <sup>21</sup> Marable, 178; William G. Whittaker, *Child Labor in America: History, Policy, and Legislative Issues*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2005), 16-20.
- <sup>22</sup> Gonzales and Delgado, *The Politics of Fear*, 128; Marable, 179.
- <sup>23</sup> Thomas Frank, *The Wrecking Crew: How Conservatives Rule* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 128-129, 155-157; Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963); Riley E. Dunlap, "Polls, Pollution, and Politics Revisited: Public Opinion on the Environment in the Reagan Era," *Environment* 29, No. 6 (July/August 1987): 10, 34-35; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010); Heather Ann Thompson, "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History," *Journal of American History* 97, No. 3 (December 2010): 703-734; Morgan J. Kousser, *Colorblind Injustice: Minority Voting Rights and the Undoing of the Second Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Frances Fox Piven, Lorraine C. Minnite, and Margaret Groarke, *Keeping Down the Black Vote: Race and the Demobilization of American Voters* (New York: The New Press, 2009), 164-203.
- <sup>24</sup> George William Pring and Penelope Canan, *SLAPPs: Getting Sued for Speaking Out* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1996), 83-104.
- <sup>25</sup> Sale, 23, 33.
- <sup>26</sup> Sale, 35-38.
- <sup>27</sup> Sale, 50-51; Frank, *The Wrecking Crew*, 159; Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 493-498.
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CHAPTER 3:  
NEOLIBERALISM, PART 2: RESISTANCE CULTURES AND COUNTER  
INSTITUTIONS

← Reagan Administration

ALEC  
Business Roundtable  
Heritage Foundation  
Moral Majority  
Eagle Forum

1980s Resistance Cultures →

Graffiti Movement  
Hip Hop  
Punk Rock

Somewhere between the distanced slogans and abstract calls to arms, we...  
discovered through Gilman a way to give our politics some application in our  
actual lives.

- Mike K., 924 Gilman Street<sup>1</sup>

One of the ideas behind ABC is breaking down the barriers between bands and  
people and making everyone equal. There is no Us and Them.

-Chris(tine) Boarts Larson, ABC No Rio<sup>2</sup>

The radical environmental movement responded to the political climate of the 1980s with direct action campaigns that they hoped would protect America's remaining wilderness from destruction. They used legal and extra-legal means, including blockading roads and sabotaging logging equipment, in order to slow the encroachment of timber, mining, and other corporate interests onto public, or formerly public, land. In the country's rapidly de-industrializing urban areas, meanwhile, youth movements, including punk rock, hip-hop, and graffiti, responded to these same political shifts with a different form of direct action. While Earth First!'s activism was intended to halt the ongoing processes of privatization and the de-regulation of industry, these youth movements emerged from urban contexts already impacted by a decade or more of declining economic opportunities, cuts to public services, and the elimination and criminalization of public areas. As a result, their resistance to neoliberalism was often much less pronounced. In many cases, though, these young people were not only lashing out. They were also attempting create alternative communities by carving out their own cultural and physical spaces.

#### THE CRIMINALIZATION OF YOUTH CULTURE

Graffiti art began as an accessible, if not quite democratic, artistic form. While experienced artists might graduate to more complex tools, amateur tagging initially required little more than a permanent marker. And while the movement's popularity has since spread along a number of diverse trajectories, it initially developed in inner cities during the late 1960s and 1970s – areas that had been devastated by a combination of

economic strangulation and so-called “urban renewal” and “slum clearance” policies. During this period, the city of Cleveland closed some \$50 million worth of its recreational facilities, while New York City cut \$40 million from its city parks. The era’s budget cuts also limited access to public schoolyards during after-school hours, a problem compounded by increasing teen unemployment, which, for African-American youths, hovered around 40 percent throughout the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

In New York City, which faced bankruptcy while watching much of its infrastructure fall into disrepair, graffiti writers became convenient scapegoats for the city’s politicians. In fact, while the city government was using its budget shortfalls to justify slashing social programs –and demanding some \$150 million in loans from public school teachers– it found as much as \$373 million to combat graffiti. City leaders justified these expenditures by likening graffiti to rape and terrorism, rather than petty vandalism. Graffiti, as it emerged during this period, was intricately linked to neoliberal policy; in some sense, writers were reclaiming urban space that was increasingly being privatized or that otherwise catered to a different “public.” This protest came at a great cost, however. In the process of a decades-long campaign, New York City and transit police arrested and beat up countless youth, including twenty-five year-old writer Michael Stewart, whom they beat to death in 1983. The city also poisoned more than two hundred city workers (one of whom died) by exposing them to “the Buff,” a chemical compound used to keep subway cars graffiti free.<sup>4</sup>

Other aspects of hip-hop paralleled many of these dynamics. Like graffiti, rap music also required relatively little initial investment in equipment; rappers deliberately recycled the underlying beats of already recorded songs and often distributed music on



bootleg tapes. According to scholar Tricia Rose, the famous break-dancer Crazy Legs took up dancing in part “because his single mother couldn’t afford Little League baseball fees.”<sup>5</sup> Break-dancers, DJs, and rappers also often used atypical venues for their performances, taking over public spaces such as intersections and abandoned lots. Occasionally, break-dancers were arrested for attracting undesirable crowds.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the political elements of its methods, some rap lyrics also carried political connotations. While the genre was, and is, extremely broad, songs like Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five’s 1982 hit “The Message” reflected a consciousness about the urban context that produced them. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, this list also included N.W.A.’s “Fuck tha Police,” Public Enemy’s “Fight the Power,” and Body Count’s “Cop Killer,” which graphically condemned white supremacy, racial profiling, and police brutality. During the 1980s, African Americans were twenty-two times more likely than their white counterparts to be killed by police officers. Among many such cases, in 1980, Philadelphia police pistol-whipped a 17-year-old black suspect to death. In Detroit, a young black man was tortured to death with an electric cattle prod while in police custody; the city’s police were also widely accused of sexually assaulting black women while detaining them on minor charges, such as speeding. In New York City, police famously murdered sixty-six-year-old Eleanor Bumpers, in 1984, after being called to evict her for falling behind on rent. Additionally, mobs of white New Yorkers murdered Willie Turks (age 34) in 1982, Michael Griffith (age 23) in 1986, and Yusef Hawkins (age 16) in 1989. The decade also saw the emergence of the “War on Drugs” and the resulting mass incarceration of youth of color. From 1983 to 2000, African-American prison admission for drug offenses rose twenty-

six fold, while rising twenty-two fold for Latinos and just eight fold for whites – despite the fact that most drug users and dealers are, in fact, white.<sup>7</sup>

The response to this injustice within American centers of power was minimal. For example, from 1986 to 1992, the FBI pursued only 128 of the 47,000 cases of police brutality that were reported to the US Department of Justice. The reaction to rap music's criticism of police violence, however, was immense. In 1988, N.W.A.'s *Straight Outta Compton* album became the first work of art, of any kind, on which the FBI took an official position – one of disapproval. Police around the country also hampered the group's ability to tour by denying security services for their concerts, and police in Detroit detained and harassed the group after storming the stage at their performance. Indeed, bolstering N.W.A.'s claims, police forces around the country proved that their legal obligations were easily suspended. Body Count, a metal band fronted by rapper Ice T, received even more prominent backlash. The group's inflammatory 1992 song "Cop Killer" denounced police brutality and invoked the names of hard-line Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates and Rodney King, who was viciously beaten by Gates' forces. Sixty members of Congress signed a statement calling the song "vile and despicable," and both President George H.W. Bush and Vice President Dan Quayle publicly denounced it. Several police organizations launched a boycott of Time Warner, the record label that had released the album, though the National Association of Black Police declined, instead urging accountability for police brutality. Congressional hearings were also called to address the negative influence of rap music on American youth. Ironically, despite the great efforts taken to censor and silence so-called "gangsta rappers," artists such as N.W.A.'s Ice Cube were aggressively sought for comment when riots engulfed

Los Angeles following the 1992 acquittal of the officers who had assaulted Rodney King.<sup>8</sup>

## DIY PUNK

The punk rock movement also developed during this cultural moment, and many of its core impulses paralleled those of graffiti and hip-hop. However, punk was more clearly rooted in anti-capitalist traditions, and its participants were predominantly, though not entirely, white. Like hip-hop, punk developed in many different directions, but it generally was guided by a “do it yourself” (DIY) ethos that encouraged participants to move beyond the role of consumers and instead become actively involved, by distributing self-produced magazines (“zines”), organizing shows (often in alternative venues, such as union halls and the basements of houses), or playing music (a frequently cited excerpt from an early punk zine, for example, contains a diagram of three guitar chords and features the caption, “Now Form a Band”).<sup>9</sup>

One specific outgrowth of the movement’s participatory emphasis was the reclamation and re-appropriation of space, such as the basements of rented homes and squatted warehouses. In their least structured forms, these “free spaces” –areas separate from the watchful eyes of the state or the influence of the marketplace– allowed youth to exert a level of control over their immediate environment. Like the empty lots occupied by DJs and the city walls temporarily claimed by graffiti writers, much of the punk world was ephemeral and limited to “pre-political”<sup>10</sup> expression. However, the movement also produced a huge number of more formal counter-institutions, including music venues, media, and record labels. Punk rock took for granted that participants could shape the

world around them and that they could do so according to their own principles, not the dictums of the market. The movement's structures, then, operated as cultural and economic alternatives to the corporate entertainment industry. As such, they also served as sites of resistance to the privatizing agenda of neoliberalism, as punks rejected the notion that all interactions should be guided by economic self-interest.

This type of activism had precedents in the New Left. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, activists founded a huge number of counter-institutions. These spaces, such as cooperative bookstores, coffee shops, and organic grocery stores, were typically organized according to basic anarchist principles: consensus-based decision-making, voluntary participation, and (relatively) horizontal leadership structures. They allowed people working to create a society based on participatory democracy the opportunity to actually experience it in the present. Like Earth First!'s blockades, these institutions constituted a "prefigurative,"<sup>11</sup> direct action approach to politics – "a congruence of means and ends."<sup>12</sup> Rather than protesting to gain access to dominant institutions, organizers instead built their own alternatives.

DIY punk venues, zines, and record labels were an extension of this same prefigurative organizing model, and in many cases, punk activists even used similar methods. So while some aspects of punk rock may have historical roots in the countercultural traditions of the Diggers and the Yippies, the politics of punk's institutions also places the movement into a narrative of participatory democracy in American activism that spans from early 1960s groups like SNCC and SDS, to Women's Liberation organizations in the late 1960s and 1970s, to the global justice movement of the 1990s and 2000s, and on to Occupy Wall Street in 2011. The establishment of

participatory counter-institutions carried especially important connotations during the post-1960s period, as neoliberal policy makers attempted to eliminate the commons altogether by privatizing public services and spaces. In this context, even mild efforts to counter private interests and assert community control became sights of major conflict.<sup>13</sup>

Among many such examples were two collectively-run, all-ages punk rock venues: Berkeley, California's 924 Gilman Street and New York City's ABC No Rio. During the 1980s and 1990s, these spaces nurtured a culture of resistance that opposed sexism, racism, and homophobia and rejected the financialization of human relationships. Through both their structural organization and their interactions with their respective communities, these collectives also gave their members opportunities to develop their political principles, and, more importantly, to learn the skills needed to apply them. 924 Gilman and ABC No Rio encouraged active democratic participation, and, as a result, they cultivated skilled, empowered activists.<sup>14</sup>

## CLAIMING A SPACE

The introduction of punk rock shows at the ABC No Rio art gallery, in 1989, and the establishment of 924 Gilman Street, in 1986, occurred within a repressive overall political context as well as during a transitional period in punk's own history. In the late 1970s, the first wave of punk seemed to be in decline, as many of the most well-known bands of the era (the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and Blondie, for example) dissolved, signed to "major" record labels, or merged with the less political new wave genre. Just as punk was being declared co-opted and dead, however, a new generation of punks emerged, jolting the movement back to life with two new sub-genres, anarcho-punk and hardcore,

which distanced themselves from the corporate music industry by emphasizing do-it-yourself methods. Anarcho-punk, typically associated with the English band/commune Crass, was overtly political. Its adherents embraced communal living, feminism, vegetarianism, and grassroots anarchism, while remaining cautiously skeptical of formal ideology. Hardcore, meanwhile, was epitomized by American bands such as the Bad Brains, Black Flag, Reagan Youth, and Minor Threat, who distinguished themselves from their punk predecessors primarily by being physically and lyrically more aggressive. For the purposes of this history, the subtle differences between the two genres are less significant than their common accomplishments. By the early eighties, this generation of punks had developed a specific set of DIY values and practices and built an international network of bands, venues, and record labels.<sup>15</sup>

However, hardcore's pursuit of individual strength quickly spiraled out of control, and by the mid-1980s, American punk shows had become increasingly dominated by violence and other expressions of machismo and intolerance. This trend was exacerbated by the lax security standards of traditional music venues, whose owners sought to maximize the admission revenue of all-ages shows in order to make up for the loss in alcohol sales. To make matters worse, club bouncers were often unpredictable, as likely to respond to non-violent situations with force as to confront actual fighting. When some audience members began bringing guns to shows, New York City's CBGB, which had played a foundational role in punk history the decade before, discontinued all-ages hardcore shows altogether. The founding members of 924 Gilman and ABC No Rio had to confront not only an over-reliance on privately owned venues but also the out-of-

control violence of their own punk community. They did so by building volunteer-based, non-profit clubs and taking unequivocal responsibility for their patrons' security.<sup>16</sup>

ABC No Rio and 924 Gilman Street were both structured according to the same basic two-part mission: to provide a safe atmosphere by confronting violence and oppressive behavior, and to involve each member of the punk community directly, through a process of consensus-based decision-making. To accomplish the first task, each collective adopted explicit policies against fighting, drugs and alcohol, and the trio of racism, sexism, and homophobia. These policies were clearly printed on their flyers, and they applied to the bands that they booked as well as audiences at their shows.

Though simply stating these principles ensured that each club would generally attract a less aggressive audience, collective members also experimented with a number of tactics for actually enforcing them. For example, during various periods in each club's history, collective members formed impromptu crowd-monitoring teams to identify potentially violent behavior, surround the offenders, and break into silly dances (such as conga lines) to de-escalate the situation. At Gilman, bands stopped playing if fights broke out, so that the entire audience could address the problem together. According to volunteer Kamala Parks, "the fighters would be brought out into the street and...the show wouldn't go on unless something was resolved."<sup>17</sup> In one notable case, the singer of a performing band responded to an altercation by leaping into the crowd, microphone in hand, to interview the antagonists. After hearing the absurdity of their grievances through the sound system, the two parties quickly made amends. However, such light-hearted antics were not sufficient for every threat.<sup>18</sup>

While ABC No Rio was fairly successful at repelling the most violent elements of their scene by simply making them feel unwelcome, Gilman often attracted them. During their early years of operation, 924 Gilman's association with the well-known, outspokenly anti-racist zine *Maximum RocknRoll*, combined with its hosting of anti-racist bands and events, made it a favorite target for Bay Area neo-Nazi skinhead gangs. After experimenting with the hiring of off-duty police officers and professional security services to combat the problem, Gilman eventually trained security personnel from among their own ranks, squarely placing responsibility for their safety on their own shoulders. According to Gilman member Martin Sprouse, skinhead attacks often led to "huge confrontations" that involved "the entire crowd blocking the front door, keeping the bad guys out."<sup>19</sup> Kamala Parks recalls an incident when "a gang of about twenty skinheads showed up and... a huge fight, complete with baseball bats, chains, and chairs, erupted in front of Gilman."<sup>20</sup> In these cases, words alone were not enough to discourage bigotry; the collective had to back up their principles physically, with united action.<sup>21</sup>

Enforcing a policy against sexism was more difficult, however, as offenders were not all as brazen, or as identifiable, as the neo-Nazis. In fact, they were often collective members themselves. Gilman member Michael D., for example, says that while he never had to "think twice" about confronting racism, he "went through a real mind shift on [sexism] because of Gilman."<sup>22</sup> Although much of the responsibility for challenging sexist behavior ultimately fell to the women of the club, naming sex-based oppression as a collective problem helped create a negotiable, if not entirely "free," space. Volunteer Lauren L., for example, says that Gilman made her feel



comfortable enough to speak up when guys say stupid shit to me or other women. I don't have to accept that kind of stuff. I know that the other people there will back me up.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to speaking out, women at Gilman also used several other methods to confront chauvinist attitudes. At one point, women hung giant banners on the inner walls that read, “‘She plays really good for a girl’ (think about what you just said)” and “‘Hey, Baby, hold my jacket so I can go in the pit’ FUCK YOU!”<sup>24</sup> Gilman women also organized events that celebrated women in punk, hosted touring punk-feminist Riot Grrrl bands, coordinated a regularly-meeting women’s caucus, and, perhaps most importantly, started bands of their own. Because of the collective’s horizontal structure, women also performed traditionally male tasks, serving as club security guards, sound engineers, and booking agents. So while Gilman did not deliver a utopian model for gender equality, the club did provide a supportive environment where women could assert their own agency. Volunteer Athena K., for example, credits her experiences at Gilman for giving her “a sense of self-respect about being biracial and... a young woman,” and several other women offer similar accounts of empowerment.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps because Mike Bromberg, who booked the first ABC No Rio punk shows, had the reputation of being the first openly gay punk in New York’s notoriously intolerant hardcore scene, issues surrounding homophobia seemingly played a larger role there than at Gilman (though the neo-Nazis, of course, represented the antithesis of every plank in the club’s platform). Most bands, and individuals, were specifically drawn to ABC No Rio because they supported the venue’s policies, but those who were excluded periodically lashed out, as in the case of a particularly inflammatory November 1990

letter to the editors of *Maximum RocknRoll*. In response to previous comments by ABC No Rio-associated bands, the author of the letter writes:

I'll tell you what's wrong with girls...they're...weak and it's easy to kick their ass...I've talked to people who go to ABC NO RIO's and it seems a new trend to be anti-homophobic because some faggot runs the club, yes faggot. I was brought up to refer to those people as such, and I'm not going to change my whole vocabulary for the sake of some stupid trend...Fuck off and learn what 'HARD'core is all about and stop being brainwashed by [*Maximum RocknRoll*].<sup>26</sup>

Underscoring the shift in punk that these venues represented, the author not only associates ABC No Rio and *Maximum RocknRoll* (which provided the initial funds for 924 Gilman) with feminist and anti-homophobic ideas, he specifically identifies this “trend” as a departure from what he believes hardcore is “all about.” In another case, a band wishing to play at ABC No Rio submitted a demo that featured a song entitled, “The Faggot Stomp.” When confronted by Bromberg, however, the band apologized and said that they no longer espoused such beliefs. Satisfied with their response, Bromberg eventually let them play at the club. Attempts by the 924 Gilman and ABC No Rio punks to create relatively safe spaces were not unchallenged or without missteps. However, they were fairly successful overall, primarily because the collectives’ members were persistent and quick to try creative approaches to solving their problems. This tenacity and flexibility stemmed directly from the democratic structures that each adopted.<sup>27</sup>

Like many of their New Left predecessors, 924 Gilman and ABC No Rio operated on a system of modified consensus. Day-to-day decisions were made by elected officers, but the clubs’ major decisions required unanimous approval at monthly meetings, and every member’s vote was equal. As ABC No Rio member Tucker explains,

Anyone is welcome to come to our meetings and have input on what we do, though only collective members have voting rights (which are obtained by

volunteering regularly). Also, in an effort to increase the openness of the collective and what we're doing, each of the bookers hold booking hours which are open to anyone to attend.... If we have a problem with any person or band then we give them the opportunity to speak at a collective meeting before any decisions are made about them (bannings, etc.)...Any decision we make is open for discussion and not made by some ultimate authority.<sup>28</sup>

924 Gilman employed similar practices, but the collective also required that patrons pay an annual membership fee with admission to their events. Doing so made all audience members accountable to the club's policies and gave them an equal stake in the club's future. Volunteer Mike Goodbar explains the significance of the access that Gilman provided its members:

At meetings, 14-year-olds have an opportunity to deal with issues sometimes as complex as those faced by 46-year-olds involved with big business corporations. In the regular world a person would have to have... access to the right job or [a privileged] situation that would provide the same experiences that Gilman does to anyone who's interested.<sup>29</sup>

The Gilman collective also experimented with a number of innovative methods to increase participation in the democratic process. Early in the club's history, for example, the collective installed a suggestion box and read its contents aloud over the microphone during shows; they also tried a short-lived policy of leaving the microphone on in between bands, allowing audience members the opportunity to question performers about their lyrical content. Gilman's inner walls likewise served as a canvass for free expression and on-going dialogue. Though not all of these policies were successful, they illustrate the collective's desire to involve as many people as possible in the maintenance of the club.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the clarity of their goals, however, both ABC No Rio and 924 Gilman experienced pitfalls and growing pains as they attempted to establish functioning democracies. During Gilman's early years, Tim Yohannon of *Maximum RocknRoll* often

held informal veto power over the collective's decisions, due to the magazine's large financial investment. Yohannon eventually became frustrated with what he interpreted as a lack of initiative among the membership and withdrew from the project. The remaining members opted to continue running the club, however, and Yohannon offered them the building's lease and sound system. During this transition, the collective decided to officially incorporate the venue as a non-profit, which limited their financial risk but also created an undesired de facto hierarchy by requiring the appointment of officers who were legal adults.<sup>31</sup>

ABC No Rio faced similar challenges. Although the art gallery itself had been run collectively since 1980, the initial punk shows in the late 1980s and early 1990s were organized in a less formal manner typical of DIY punk. Individuals like Mike Bromberg booked the shows, but band members and friends contributed by taking money at the door, preventing fights, and cleaning up afterward. Within a few years, the ABC No Rio punks began organizing their efforts in a much more structured fashion, which subsequently allowed them to take a greater stake in the maintenance of the building. However, this transition presented the group with several obstacles. Initial efforts to democratize booking practices, for example, resulted in a free-for-all that failed to establish a mechanism for ensuring that every show had the appropriate bands, volunteers, and promotion. Eventually, the collective learned from these mistakes and developed practices that were both effective and in line with their democratic values.<sup>32</sup>

Although 924 Gilman and ABC No Rio each benefited from the initial involvement of members with more extensive organizational backgrounds, most collective members had no previous experience with activism. However, because they

encouraged active participation, the clubs attracted and involved new members. They allowed room for democratic experimentation that not only empowered members individually but also taught them how to resolve conflict collectively – and sometimes creatively. Specifically, the internal organizing models that Gilman and ABC No Rio adopted led their members to learn communication and problem-solving skills, which they used to confront external crises, as well.

## CONFLICTS AND CAMPAIGNS

During the 1990s, altercations with neighbors and government officials nearly forced 924 Gilman to close on three separate occasions. The first major conflict began in 1991, when the collective requested a change to their city permit. At the behest of Tim Yohannon, the club's original 1986 charter had contained a clause that prohibited advertising for Gilman events. Yohannon had hoped that the punk community would support the club regardless of which bands were playing, but the policy had never been successful. As part of the permit modification process, the Berkeley Zoning Board sought input from local police, who reported that Gilman's control over its patrons was inadequate, leading to underage drinking, loitering, and vandalism. After reviewing these complaints, the board not only rejected the collective's request but also threatened to revoke the permit altogether. They eventually granted the club six months in which to make the necessary improvements before facing a final judgment.<sup>33</sup>

If the Gilman punks had previously taken their status in their community for granted, the permit crisis awakened them to their responsibilities. In response to the board's ruling, the collective quickly launched a petition drive and began acquiring letters

of support from former workers, patrons' parents, and other members of the Berkeley community. Volunteers also went door-to-door to solicit suggestions and support from the club's neighbors. Throughout the process, Gilman members worked closely with the police department and the city government. In January 1992, for example, representatives of the club met with local police through the city's dispute resolution service in order to build a more constructive working relationship. When the venue's permit again appeared on the Zoning Board's agenda, more than one hundred Gilman supporters attended the meeting. The overwhelming support for the club pressed the board to grant the requested permit changes, with stipulations that the collective provide additional outdoor trash cans and continue to improve their internal security.<sup>34</sup>

Gilman's second major crisis began in 1995, when the Pyramid Brewing Company announced its intention to open a brewpub directly across the street from the club. In addition to recognizing problems inherent to locating a drinking establishment near an all-ages venue, collective members were also worried that the arrival of an upscale establishment would drive up property costs and eventually force them out of the neighborhood. To voice these concerns, Gilman representatives attended Pyramid's preliminary permit hearing, and three collective members even visited the brewing company's Seattle, Washington headquarters, at the company's behest. The collective also issued a series of successful press announcements, conducted an outreach campaign to their other neighbors, and filed a formal petition with the Berkeley Zoning Board.<sup>35</sup>

When the brewpub's permit came before the board, dozens of Gilman supporters spoke on the club's behalf, and one zoning officer later described the presentation as "one of the most professional" he had seen.<sup>36</sup> Although the board approved Pyramid's permit,

they also addressed many of the collective's concerns by requiring that the brewing company pay for a new traffic light, hire security guards to contain bar patrons, and meet regularly with Gilman members to resolve disputes. Gilman's interaction with Pyramid, while serious in its potential ramifications, was not entirely antagonistic. Pyramid responded to the collective's objections with seemingly genuine concern, and a representative of the brewpub even wrote a letter of support for Gilman during its next major conflict.<sup>37</sup>

Gilman's third altercation of the decade was its most hostile. In October 1998, DiCon Fiber Optics, a neighboring business, filed a grievance with the city that the club's patrons were responsible for an increasing amount of vandalism, graffiti, and litter. The company's complaints, which included the sensational claim that Gilman patrons had attacked the company's trees with machetes, were probably overblown. Gilman cleanup crews already tended to neighborhood trash and vandalism, and, according to Gilman volunteer John H., "Eighth Street was a sort of no-man's-land on which many users dumped trash. Gilman [unfairly] received the blame for much of it."<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, the company's threat to re-locate 400 high-paying jobs was enough to persuade the city to intervene. In December, Berkeley police set up video and still camera surveillance on the club in order to catch vandals in the act, though they were apparently unsuccessful.<sup>39</sup>

During the ensuing months, Gilman members canvassed the neighborhood for support and gathered several thousand signatures on an online petition. DiCon, however, continually refused the club's offer to pursue mediation. Eventually, at the city's behest, representatives from both sides met with police and city planning officials to draft a memorandum of understanding. The collective agreed to increase its attention to

neighborhood graffiti, but DiCon quickly stopped meeting with the club's representatives and moved out of the neighborhood soon afterward. As in their two previous conflicts, Gilman was able to work through formal government channels from a position of relative strength, but this was only because of the collective's ability to gain the support of their neighbors, rather than alienating them. The default loyalties of city officials and the police were to the concerns of businesses.<sup>40</sup>

ABC No Rio also faced major crises during this period, but their circumstances ultimately required a more aggressive response. The ABC No Rio art gallery had been enmeshed in the housing politics of New York's Lower East Side since its 1980 founding. In fact, its very lease was a concession from the city following a dispute over an illegal art exhibit that focused on gentrification in the neighborhood. The punk contingent that took over the space a decade later inherited an institutional history of conflict with the city government and solidarity with the neighborhood's homeless and squatter populations. Throughout the nineties, these relationships continued to define ABC No Rio's position in its community and played a central role in the collective's development.<sup>41</sup>

The punk contingent arrived at ABC No Rio during a period of escalation in the Lower East Side's housing conflict. In the summer of 1988, the city attempted to enforce a curfew on nearby Tompkins Square Park, which had become a residence for the neighborhood's homeless community. Over the next several months, a series of protests were held to contest the city's actions, which also included the eviction of squatters in nearby buildings. Police responded to the protests with force, resulting in arrests and injuries; one specific protest generated over one hundred complaints of police brutality.



The city pressed on, however, and by June 1991, the two hundred homeless residents of the park had been evicted, and the area was indefinitely cordoned off for renovations. Though ABC No Rio was not directly involved in this dispute, the gallery did host benefits for local evictees and screened raw footage from the Tompkins Square riots. Meanwhile, the collective's relationship with the city government continued to be as adversarial as ever. The city proved to be a negligent, and often hostile, landlord, and the collective responded by filing several lawsuits and engaging in a five year rent strike that was resolved, only unofficially, in 1993. Two years later, the neighborhood's housing conflict again intensified, this time with more intense effects for ABC No Rio.<sup>42</sup>

In May 1995, hundreds of New York City riot police, complete with an armored vehicle, arrived in the Lower East Side to evict squatters from buildings on East 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The thirty-one squatters inside were expecting the eviction and had barricaded the doors and stairways of their buildings. Although the squatters were forced out within a few hours, several of them re-occupied one of the buildings on the Fourth of July, while police forces were engaged with crowds at a nearby fireworks presentation. Police again cleared the squat and arrested nearly twenty people. The circumstances of these evictions were particularly controversial, as the New York State Supreme Court had previously ruled in the squatters' favor.<sup>43</sup>

In this context of overt hostility, overwhelming police force, and bad faith negotiations, the ABC No Rio collective became embroiled in their own eviction battle. In October 1994, the city stopped accepting the gallery's rent checks, and over the next several months, officials moved to evict the collective and formally "dispose" of the building. Despite the collective's many offers to purchase it, the city instead made

arrangements to sell it to a non-profit housing organization, Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE). Hesitant to battle another non-profit group, ABC No Rio members attempted to negotiate for partial use of the space, but AAFE's proposal required that ABC No Rio pay double the market rate for rent, and the two parties were unable resolve a temporary re-location for the gallery during proposed renovations.<sup>44</sup>

Talks between the groups quickly broke down, and the city moved to bypass normal public hearings by declaring the space an "Urban Development Action Area Project" (UDAAP). ABC No Rio responded by taking their case to the media, publicly vowing to fight for the gallery through "the courts...outreach, protest...public support, and...physical defense of the building."<sup>45</sup> Squatters, meanwhile, moved in to provide a last line of defense against eviction.<sup>46</sup>

In November 1995, ABC No Rio representatives testified at a hearing of the city's Permits, Dispositions, and Concessions Subcommittee. They explained the collective's significance to New York's alternative arts scene, their attempts to feed the neighborhood's hungry each week through Food Not Bombs, and their efforts to host children's arts classes. They also related their long history with the city, including the many offers to purchase the building. The council nonetheless voted unanimously to expedite transfer of the building. From late 1995 through 1996, the collective worked to publicize their struggle and prevent their ousting through legal channels. In April 1996, they won an important, though temporary, victory when their eviction proceedings were dismissed – for the third time. The collective also filed a lawsuit of their own, claiming that the city's actions were politically-motivated. In preparation for yet another eviction

hearing in October, ABC No Rio, along with several other threatened arts organizations, held a fundraising rally at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>47</sup>

By December 1996, the collective's situation had become desperate. That month, a judge suspended eviction proceedings, but only until city officials restored utilities to the building, which they had illegally disconnected. The stay was only expected to last for a few months, so the collective began 1997 by escalating their tactics. In January, collective members organized two public actions that targeted AAFE. In the first, ABC No Rio sympathizers plastered the group's headquarters with posters reading "Greed," "Profiteering," and "Corruption." Two dozen protestors rang bells and played drums while others loudly decried the group's role in eviction proceedings. Later that month, collective members again targeted the AAFE office, chaining themselves to desks and windows and demanding that the eviction process be stopped; five of the protestors were arrested. The collective then shifted their focus to the housing department with a sit-in at the agency's office. Following the demonstration, outgoing commissioner Liliam Barrios-Paoli invited ABC No Rio representatives to a meeting, at which she offered to sell the building to the collective for \$1. In exchange, the gallery was required to expel its squatters and acquire \$100,000 for renovations. The collective accepted the offer and began developing formal plans for building restoration and fundraising.<sup>48</sup>

Over the next several years, city officials repeatedly changed the amount of money that they expected the group to raise. By October 2004, the collective had secured nearly \$300,000 (primarily through small donations), and the long process of transferring ownership of the building began. In June 2006, the sale was finalized, after more than twenty years of fighting the city for the building. However, the collective soon realized

that simple renovations would be insufficient for the dilapidated space, and they instead began pursuing a more ambitious, \$2 million “tear down and rebuild” plan. Three years later, almost to the day, the collective announced an interesting twist to their historically volatile relationship with the city government: In June 2009, city officials granted ABC No Rio \$1,650,000 in municipal funding for their rebuilding project.<sup>49</sup>

During their eviction battle, the ABC No Rio collective used a variety of tactics to maintain control of the building. Through official channels, the gallery engaged local officials and fought its eviction, ultimately extending its month-to-month lease for over two years. As the conflict escalated, collective members also engaged in civil disobedience, in the form of sit-ins as well as the physical occupation of their building. According to volunteer Chris Boarts Larson, they also attempted to jam the city’s fax machines with messages reading “Save ABC No Rio.”<sup>50</sup> ABC No Rio’s biggest asset, however, was its ability to gather public support through extensive, positive press coverage in both alternative and mainstream media. Like their counterparts at 924 Gilman, ABC No Rio members refused to be isolated in their struggles, and they used every tool available to them – not just those that seemed “punk.” They were inherently radical cultural spaces, and their survival depended on effective, not just symbolic, strategies and tactics.<sup>51</sup>

## CONCLUSION

924 Gilman Street and ABC No Rio were founded during a period of growing conservatism in the United States. Membership in the Ku Klux Klan nearly tripled from 1971 to 1980, while American neo-Nazi groups became increasingly prominent reached

during the subsequent decade. Meanwhile, conservative activists like Anita Bryant, Jerry Falwell, and the Heritage Foundation worked to curtail the rights of women and homosexuals, as outlined in Chapter 2. All of these sentiments were reflected concretely in government policy at the federal and local levels. The punks who organized these venues did so to challenge parallel reactionary elements in their own communities and to reclaim the punk movement from a politically ambiguous trajectory. They responded to the machismo of 1980s hardcore with clear, outspoken positions against violence and oppression, and they worked collectively to find viable methods for enforcing them. Undoubtedly, the policies that they developed had limitations; the collectives' definitions of racism, sexism, and homophobia, for example, struggled to address more than their most blatant forms. Nonetheless, the principles that the Gilman and ABC No Rio punks outlined were not just lip service; they backed up their words with actions. While right-wing pundits in the 1980s and early 1990s were attempting to assuage white guilt and re-define anti-racism as a case of political correctness run amuck, punks at 924 Gilman Street were fighting off neo-Nazi skinheads. While New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani devoted his administration to a general assault on civil liberties, the arts, and social services, punks at ABC No Rio provided a space devoted to those very causes while openly challenging the legitimacy of the city's housing department.<sup>52</sup>

This generation of punks, including not only Gilman and ABC No Rio, but also bands like Fugazi and the punk-feminist Riot Grrrl movement, ultimately had a significant impact on American popular culture, as well. The "alternative" genre that emerged in the early 1990s initially revolved around bands like Nirvana, who, while no longer punk in the DIY sense, were outspoken opponents of racism, sexism, and

homophobia. The punk movement's cultural form, however, has often led many scholars (and punks) to assume that its politics are stylistic and of a purely symbolic nature. These surface-level, and ultimately condescending, interpretations may be appropriate when teenagers limit their rebellion to spiking their hair or listening to loud music, but they have very little to offer when youth respond to their environment with proactive organization. Although Gilman and ABC No Rio were ostensibly punk rock venues, they also served as battlegrounds for a variety of broader struggles. Like their counterparts in the cooperatives movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, the Gilman and ABC No Rio collectives confronted dominant institutions by organizing local alternatives that reflected their values. The methods they used to build these institutions also borrowed heavily from the democratic movements of that period.

Still in operation, 924 Gilman and ABC No Rio are the most well-known youth-run, all ages punk rock venues in the United States, due to their longevity as well as their progeny. Gilman helped launch the careers of bands such as Operation Ivy, Jawbreaker, Samiam, and Green Day, while ABC No Rio was a home base for Born Against, Ted Leo, and Chris Boarts Larson's zine *Slug + Lettuce*. They are not otherwise unique within U.S. punk, however. Similarly-structured venues have been organized with varying degrees of success throughout the country, including the Vera Project in Seattle, Washington; 1919 Hemphill in Fort Worth, Texas; Solidarity Books in Indianapolis, Indiana; the BRYCC House in Louisville, Kentucky; and the Mr. Roboto Project in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania. Punk counter-institutions have also included a number of cooperative record labels and zines, most notably *Maximum RocknRoll* and *Profane Existence*. Members of any of these groups would have confronted organizational

challenges similar to those faced by the Gilman and ABC No Rio collectives, but even less structured DIY punk ventures necessitate the development of basic organizing skills, such as designing and distributing flyers, monitoring crowds, and negotiating with police and neighbors.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps because these skills have been so essential to its development, the punk movement has played a prominent role in the global fight to maintain autonomous cultural spaces. Just as ABC No Rio's eviction battle represented only one portion of a much larger struggle over housing and public space in New York City, the conflicts faced by both of these collectives were also part of broader trends. Police surveillance of 924 Gilman Street in the late 1990s was relatively innocuous, but dozens of other alternative arts spaces have experienced similar, and often more repressive, challenges from state and private interests. For example, Indianapolis' Solidarity Books was closed in 2003 for a fire code violation, following weeks of surveillance and a joint raid by the local police, the bomb squad, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Richmond, California's Burnt Ramen and Buffalo, New York's Hey Dude! suffered similar fates the same year. Outside the U.S., police have clashed with youth over a host of autonomous spaces, including the Ungdomshuset in Copenhagen, Denmark; Metelkova in Ljubljana, Slovenia; Fabryka in Warsaw, Poland; and Köpi in Berlin, Germany—all of which have also served as punk rock venues. Because punk has been an on-going struggle for the freedom to construct culture, it continues to be a sight of constant conflict with authority.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Mike K.,” in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Brian Edge (San Francisco: Maximum RocknRoll, 2004), 106.

<sup>2</sup> Chris Larson, *Slug + Lettuce* #37, December 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Yo Mama’s DisFUNKtional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 46, 50-51.

<sup>4</sup> Joe Austin, *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 16, 17, 80, 88, 130, 267, 269.

<sup>5</sup> Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Rose, *Black Noise*, 7, 50, 73, 90.

<sup>7</sup> Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1990* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1991), 172-173; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 98.

<sup>8</sup> George Lipsitz, “The Hip Hop Hearings: Censorship, Social Memory, and Intergenerational Tensions among African Americans,” in *Generations of Youth: Youth Cultures and History in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. Joe Austin and Michael Willard (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 400-403; Rose, *Black Noise*, 183.

<sup>9</sup> Ryan Moore, “Friends Don’t Let Friends Listen to Corporate Rock: Punk as a Field of Cultural Production,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 36, No. 4 (August 2007): 446; Stephen Duncombe, *Notes From Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (New York: Verso, 1997), 118-121; Mark Andersen, *All the Power: Revolution without Illusion* (Chicago: Punk Planet Books, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, 188-193.

<sup>11</sup> Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 53.

<sup>12</sup> Joyce P. Rothschild and J. Allen Whitt, *The Cooperative Workplace: Potentials and Dilemmas of Organizational Democracy and Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 17.

<sup>13</sup> An institutional perspective may also help clarify the relationship between punk and the broader Left, by applying the model outlined by Sara Evans and Harry Boyte in *Free Spaces*. Evans and Boyte argue that participatory settings can become “breeding grounds for democratic change” by providing an activist/organizer skill set that propels further political movements. For example, the Civil Rights Movement of the early 1960s relied on a large base of organizers, many of whom were inadvertently trained through participation in local churches. Not only did these churches provide a venue for open discourse, active congregation members also learned basic organizing skills, such as how to run meetings, recruit new members, and hold fundraisers. By this same pattern, many second-wave feminists cut their teeth in groups like SDS and SNCC. Evans’ and Boyte’s interest in autonomous space is also shared by several other authors. Following Stuart Hall et al., who present a street corner as an example of youth liberated space, Andersen and Duncombe both argue that the punk community can serve as a free space for youth. See also Hakim Bey’s similar concept, the “Temporary Autonomous Zone.” Evans and Boyte differ from these other authors, however, with their emphasis on the skills that participants gain in these spaces. The case studies in this paper, like churches and social justice groups, expose participants to more sophisticated organizational structures and methods than that of a street corner. Sara M. Evans and Harry Chatten Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 42-43, 61, 102-103, 187; Stuart Hall et al., “Subcultures, Cultures, and Class: A Theoretical Overview,” in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Cultures in Post-War Britain*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson University, 1976), 43-47; Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Although there have been many similarly-structured punk institutions in the United States, 924 Gilman Street and ABC No Rio were selected for this study both because their reputations have made them internationally influential and because the collectives themselves have taken an interest in documenting their own histories. In 2004, former Gilman volunteer Brian Edge published a compilation of Gilman’s internal documents, press clipping about the venue, and seventy-eight essays by former Gilman workers. Edge’s collection, *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, is arranged in approximate chronological order and is divided according to the club’s major conflicts with the local government and neighboring businesses. The collection is effectively a Gilman archive, and Edge’s editing is limited to replacing collective members’



last names with initials, in order to protect their privacy. The ABC No Rio collective, meanwhile, has used their web page to store several news articles and internal documents from various periods in their history. Brian Edge, ed., *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...* (San Francisco: Maximum RocknRoll, 2004); ABC No Rio, "ABC No Rio History," <http://www.abcnorio.org/about/history/history.html> (accessed July 3, 2007). See also, Jack Boulware and Silke Tudor, *Gimme Something Better: The Profound, Progressive, and Occasionally Pointless History of Bay Area Punk from Dead Kennedys to Green Day* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 280-402; Shannon Stewart, *In Every Town: An All-Ages Music Manual* (Seattle, WA: All-Ages Movement Project, 2010), 105-117, 149-165.

<sup>15</sup> Among Crass' many hijinks was the anonymous release of the "Thatchergate" tape, a bogus recording of a conversation between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in which the former threatens to bomb Europe and the latter claims responsibility for deliberately escalating the Falklands War. Though eventually linked back to the band, initial reports linked the tape to the KGB. George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996), 75, 80-82, 86; Richard Cross, "'The Hippies Now Wear Black': Crass and the anarcho-punk movement, 1977-1984," *Socialist History*, 26 (2004), 25, 32, 34, 37-38; *American Hardcore*, directed by Steven Blush and Paul Rachmen, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2007; Tim Gosling, "'Not For Sale': The Underground Network of Anarcho-Punk," in *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual*, ed. Bennett and Peterson (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 170-174.

<sup>16</sup> Lauraine Leblanc, *Pretty in Punk: Girls' Gender Resistance in a Boys' Subculture*.

(New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 48-54; *American Hardcore*, directed by Blush and Rachmen; "Jake Filth," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 43.

<sup>17</sup> Kamala Parks, interview by author, September 9, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> "Mike K.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 106; "Devon M.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 47; Brian Edge, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 67; Vicki Law, *Enter the Nineties: ABC No Rio Poets, Punks, Politics* (Self-published, 2005), 23.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Sprouse, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 14.

<sup>20</sup> "Kamala P.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 40.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Denlinger, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 83, 86; Tim Yohannon, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 11; Ben S., in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 156; Kamala Parks, interview by author, September 9, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> "Michael D.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 133.

<sup>23</sup> "Lauren L.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 253.

<sup>24</sup> Photographs by "Susan S.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 285.

<sup>25</sup> "Athena K.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 120; Rachel Siebert, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 281-282, 284-285; Jane G., in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 19; "Celia S.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 217; "Adrienne D.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 27; "Lauren L.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 253. For more on the Riot Grrrl movement, see Kristen Schilt, "'Riot Grrrl Is...': The Contestation over Meaning in a Music Scene," 115-130; *Don't Need You*, directed by Kerri Koch, Urban Cowgirl Productions, 2006; Ryan Moore, "Friends Don't Let Friends Listen to Corporate Rock," 465-466; Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins, *Dance of Days: Two Decades of Punk in the Nation's Capital* (New York: Akashic Books, 2003).

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<sup>27</sup> Law, *Enter the Nineties*, 7, 29; Jim Testa, "Interview with Mike Bullshit," *Jersey Beat* 39, 1989; Chris Boarts Larson, interview by author, e-mail interview, September 9, 2007; Esneider, interview by author, e-mail interview, August 20, 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Jim Testa, "The Hardcore Matinees Today: Still DIY After All These Years," *Jersey Beat* 77, 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Mike Goodbar, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 181.

<sup>30</sup> "Clayton M.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 234; Kerith Pickett, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 49; Mike Goodbar, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 181; Tim Yohannon, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 9; Brian Edge, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 66; Branwyn Bigglestone, interview by author, e-mail interview, December 4, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Kerith Pickett, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 49; Tim Yohannon, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 7; "Jonathan D.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 88-89.

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- <sup>34</sup> Michael Diehl, in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 133; in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 158-164.
- <sup>35</sup> "John H.," in *924 Gilman: The Story So Far...*, ed. Edge, 170-171.
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<sup>50</sup> Chris Boarts Larson, interview by author, e-mail interview, September 14, 2007.

<sup>51</sup> ABC No Rio's decisions to work with the city and to re-locate squatters have not been without detractors. However, according to ABC No Rio Director Steven Englander, the collective's decisions were reached democratically, and squatters had been recruited for the explicit purpose of making eviction more difficult. The decision not to "go out on principle as martyrs" was not a difficult one. Says Englander, "thousands and thousands of people have benefited from [ABC No Rio's survival]...eight people lost where they were living, me being one of them." Liza Kirwin, "Oral history interview with Steven Englander," Sept. 7-Oct. 10 2007, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/englan07.htm> (accessed July 14, 2010).

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CHAPTER 4:  
GLOBALIZATION, PART 2: NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION  
AND THE GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

← Clinton Administration

IMF/World Bank  
NAFTA  
WTO

1990s Global Justice Movement →

The Zapatistas  
United Students Against Sweatshops  
Direct Action Network  
Coalition of Immokalee Workers

Today, as I sign the North American Free Trade Agreement into law and call for further progress on GATT, I believe we have found our footing. And I ask all of you...to recognize that there is no turning back from the world of today and tomorrow.

- William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States<sup>1</sup>

Behind those images, the reality is that there are farm workers who contribute their sweat and blood so that enormous corporations can profit, all the while living in sub-poverty misery, without benefits, without the right to overtime or protection when we organize. Others are working by force, against their will, terrorized by violent employers, under the watch of armed guards, held in modern-day slavery. The right to a just wage, the right to work free of forced labor, the right to organize –three of the rights in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights– are routinely violated when it comes to farm workers in the United States.

- Lucas Benitez, Coalition of Immokalee Workers<sup>2</sup>

In December 1993, after more than six years of negotiations spanning three US administrations, President Bill Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) into law. Among the treaty's many supporters were the Business Roundtable, the National Association of Manufacturers, the US Chamber of Commerce, and the Heritage Foundation. Mexican envoy Hermann von Bertrab recalls receiving additional letters of support from groups such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Chemical Manufacturers Association, and Citizens for a Sound Economy. And though NAFTA was opposed by US labor unions, environmental organizations, and elements of the libertarian Right, it received bipartisan support in both Congressional houses. If the election of Ronald Reagan had signaled the political arrival of the New Right, the election of Bill Clinton announced their enduring legacy. For after three consecutive Republican Presidential terms, the 1992 election offered a limited choice between two devotees of the neoliberal school.<sup>3</sup>

By de-regulating the movement of manufacturing, investment capital, and goods, NAFTA increased the power and reach of American multinational corporations while limiting the impact of human rights, labor, and environmental activists. At the same time, the Clinton Administration restricted the movement of people by tightening security along the US-Mexico border. As border crossing became more difficult, it also became more dangerous. Between 1994 and 2001, more than 1,700 people died attempting to enter the US from Mexico. The criminalization of migrant labor also made already marginalized workers even more vulnerable. In the fifteen years following the implementation of NAFTA, Florida law enforcement freed more than one thousand enslaved farmworkers who had been "held in chains, pistol whipped, locked at night into

shacks in chain-link enclosures patrolled by armed guards” and threatened with beatings or death if they attempted to escape.<sup>4</sup>

## NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION

In the aftermath of World War II, the Allied powers began constructing a new global governing system to guide international relationships. It included financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which were negotiated at the Bretton Woods conference and went into effect in 1945, as well as the General Agreement on Treaties and Tariffs (GATT), which went into effect two years later. It also included political organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), also established in 1945. As the Cold War escalated –including the expansion of US and Soviet involvement into wars of independence in European colonies such as Vietnam– global elites formed additional institutions, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in 1949, and the Group of 6 (G6), in 1975.

Paralleling shifts in domestic policy during the 1970s and 1980s, US-led global organizations increasingly stressed the implementation of aggressive neoliberal policies as conditions for developmental loans. They included the privatization of state-owned resources, the removal of protective tariffs, and the widespread gutting of social services and safety nets. In some cases, these loans were also coupled with CIA-backed coups, such as the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973. While the benefits of World Bank/IMF loans are heavily debated, the residual effects are nonetheless striking. According to one analysis, because of their incredibly high interest, “from 1982 to 1998, indebted countries paid four times their original debts, and at the same time their

debt increased four times.”<sup>5</sup> BBC News reached a similar conclusion, noting that the nations of Africa had paid back more than their original debts by 2002, but still owed about half the original sum, around \$300 billion. In other words, these countries, even when they re-paid their initial loans, remained perpetually vulnerable to additional forced concessions. In effect, the IMF and World Bank allowed Western elites to financially colonize (or re-colonize, in many cases) much of the world. According to former World Bank chief economist and Senior Vice President Joseph Stiglitz,

When the IMF arrives in a country, they are interested in only one thing. How do we make sure the banks and financial institutions are paid?...It is the IMF that keeps the [financial] speculators in business. They're not interested in development or what helps a country get out of poverty.<sup>6</sup>

During the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this speculation accelerated. While the world's poorest countries were \$25 billion in debt in 1970, that number had grown to \$523 billion by 2002.<sup>7</sup>

In late 1991, the Soviet Union disbanded, ending the Cold War and once again shifting the balance of global power. With new markets now easier to access, economic elites quickly moved to extend their reach and consolidate their power, most notably through the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which replaced the GATT in 1995, and the implementation of treaties such as NAFTA, which went into effect on January 1, 1994. Absent the global competition between the Soviet and Western blocs, these new agreements allowed business interests to pursue their own imperialistic agendas virtually unchecked by, and often with assistance from, national governments. NAFTA attempted to eliminate all barriers to corporate expansion within the “free trade zone” of Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The WTO pursued similar ends on a global scale. By the mid-1990s, these institutions, together with already

existing organizations, comprised a global power structure that facilitated the free movement of capital (including investments and the re-location of factories), compelled neoliberal concessions from less powerful nations by maintaining perpetual debt, and allowed corporations to trump national, state, and local laws.

## THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION

Though largely negotiated by the administration of President George H. W. Bush, NAFTA is among the most significant legacies of the Clinton Administration. As a prominent member of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a coalition established to push the Democratic Party to the right, Bill Clinton pursued an aggressive neoliberal platform, just as Reagan and Bush had before him. Clinton cut public services, including a massive reform of welfare benefits through the spitefully-named Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. He pursued the further privatization of government services, including the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act of 1998, which required that federal agencies regularly produce lists of their services that could be handed to the private sector. Clinton also approved of massive de-regulation of industry. He signed the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which essentially removed barriers to US media monopolies, resulting in huge conglomerates such as Clear Channel Communications. He also signed the 1999 Financial Services Modernization Act, which “modernized” financial services by repealing key components of the 1933 Glass-Steagall Act. Aided by huge growth bubbles in the housing and “dot com” industries, the combined results of Clinton’s policies allowed U.S. corporate profits to rise by some eighty-eight percent during the 1990s, while the pay of American CEOs



rose by a staggering 463%. However, roughly sixty percent of American corporations reported no tax liability between 1996 and 2000. The benefits of the economic boom were primarily limited to those at the top, as evidenced most clearly by the impact of NAFTA.<sup>8</sup>

Despite its name, the North American Free Trade Agreement was less about actual trade than investment. In effect, the agreement provided corporate elites with contractual guarantees that companies would enjoy certain privileges in all three nations. To that end, NAFTA lived up to its promises. By accelerating processes already underway since the 1970s, NAFTA helped increase foreign investment in Mexico from \$3.46 billion in 1993 to some \$24.73 billion in 2001.<sup>9</sup>

The returns on that investment were not shared evenly, however. In the ten years following NAFTA's implementation, minimum wage in Mexico dropped twenty percent, impacting forty million workers. Economic opportunities were also limited. For example, after the widespread purchasing of Mexican banks by US banks, loans to Mexican businesses shrunk from ten percent of GDP to just 0.3% by 2000. Additionally, NAFTA-related environmental damage to the Mexican border region (including the addition of 2,700 new factories) is estimated at \$47 billion – for the year 1999 alone. Perhaps most notoriously, Mexican markets were flooded with cheap US corn (cheap largely due to US government subsidies). As a result, income for Mexican farmers dropped by seventy percent, and as many as 1.5 million Mexican farmers were put out of work altogether.<sup>10</sup>

Mexican workers responding to these changes suffered greatly. Many sought work in *maquiladoras*, mega-factories along the US-Mexico border. For companies like

Hasbro, Fisher Price, and General Motors, these areas became the neoliberal endgame – factory towns without labor, environmental, or human rights protections. The constant influx of desperate workers provided no incentive for factory owners to treat them as anything more than disposable. For workers, seventy percent of them young women between the ages of 16 and 24, this translated to dangerous conditions and poverty wages (minimum wages of \$3.40 per day, compared to \$5.15 per hour in the US). Outside of the factories, this lawlessness had other effects. In Ciudad Juarez, just across the border from El Paso, Texas, the bodies of hundreds of women have been found raped, dismembered, and mutilated since the early 1990s. Hundreds more women have gone missing. At the same time, fleeing to the United States has also become increasingly difficult. For while NAFTA eased the cross-border movement of capital, new border policies restricted the movement of human beings. The budget for the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) tripled between 1993 and 2002, while the number of border patrol agents doubled – making the INS the second largest federal law enforcement agency at the time, just shy of the FBI. Between 1994 and 2001, at least 1,700 people died attempting to cross the Mexican border into the US. According to Wayne Cornelius, the death toll “rose in tandem with the intensification of border enforcement,” as increased patrols forced migrants to attempt more dangerous border crossings. Additionally, as of 2008, the United Nations estimated that as many as seventy percent of women attempting to cross the border had been raped by “coyotes” or US border agents.<sup>11</sup>

Inside the United States, though corporate profits sky-rocketed, many workers fared poorly. Adding to the millions lost in the 1970s and 1980s, the US lost another 1/6

of its manufacturing jobs in the first decade of NAFTA. Of these three million jobs, at least one million can be traced directly to the “free trade” agreement. Additionally, US workers without a college degree, who make up roughly seventy-five percent of the workforce, suffered a twelve percent wage decline during the period. Thirty-eight thousand small farms also went bankrupt, while agri-business corporations, such as Cargill and Con-Agra, grew rapidly.<sup>12</sup>

## CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION

In addition to its economic and physical impacts on the populations of all three countries, NAFTA also presented an assault on the very foundations of their democracies. As explored in Chapter 2, during the 1980s, Ronald Reagan gutted federal budgets and appointed saboteurs to head federal agencies in order to ensure that federal legislation protecting the environment, workers, and marginalized groups would not be implemented. By doing so, Reagan severely limited the impact that activists could have, especially at the federal level. However, environmental, civil rights, and labor activists were still able to make some changes at the state and local level, and they were also able to defend some of their movements’ previous gains.

NAFTA trumped many of those achievements. Among the contractual obligations of the treaty was a secret appeals process called “Chapter 11,” which allowed multi-national corporations exemptions from national, state, and local laws. While the extent of these appeals remains deliberately unclear, many noteworthy cases have been brought to light. Canadian corporations, for example, sued the State of California over its mining regulations and its ban on a gasoline additive, and suspected carcinogen, called

MTBE. US corporations, meanwhile, sued the Canadian government for banning another gasoline additive, MMT, which is a suspected neurotoxin; US companies also opposed Canada's ban on exporting toxic waste. Perhaps most famously, the U.S.-based corporation Metelclad sued the Mexican city of Guadalupe for refusing to allow it to install a toxic waste site near the city. In effect, NAFTA provided a "lowest common denominator" approach to environmental, public health, and labor regulations by allowing corporations the freedom to comply only with the weakest of them.<sup>13</sup>

Like NAFTA, the World Trade Organization also provided a mechanism for corporations to over-rule the laws of nations, and, thus far, the WTO has ruled in favor of corporations in 100% of these appeals. The legislation that they have trumped includes a US law that banned a tuna fishing net responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of dolphins each year; a Massachusetts law that denied state contracts to companies doing business with the military dictatorship in Burma; gasoline standards in the US Clean Air Act; a provision of the Endangered Species Act that required shrimp nets to include a device to allow endangered sea turtles to escape; and a European Union ban on beef from hormone-treated cattle.<sup>14</sup>

The expansion of free trade initiatives like NAFTA and the WTO led to massive movement of raw materials, consumer goods, capital investments, factories, and workers. In order to maximize their profits, companies moved their manufacturing facilities to the countries with the lowest wages and fewest government regulations. In many cases, this race to the bottom was facilitated by IMF/World Bank loans, which demanded the erosion of workers' rights, social services, and environmental protections. At the same

time, free trade agreements allowed cheap imports to undercut local industries and displaced huge numbers of workers.<sup>15</sup>

The globalization of neoliberal policies expedited the exploitation of the already oppressed, while also complicating the global power structure and making resistance considerably more difficult. Power itself became concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, but the vulnerabilities of the power structure were decentralized, creating a complicated dilemma. In this deliberately unregulated global economy, no individual in the supply chain had to claim responsibility for “sweatshop” working conditions in contracted, or “outsourced,” factories. Factory owners could rightfully claim that they would not receive contracts if they raised wages, while parent corporations could argue that they contracted based on competitive prices, not their repercussions. Consumers, likewise, made their purchasing decisions based on the limits of their own personal budgets. Meanwhile, the economic and political elites in charge of factories and parent companies, praised free trade’s triumphs and dismissed any negative effects as temporary growing pains.

Part of the problem was that in organizations like the WTO (as in the US government during the 1980s), the distinction between state and corporate actors was minimal. More importantly, much like the *Wizard of Oz*, the secretive but powerful façades of these global institutions also allowed elite power brokers to remain relatively anonymous and thus virtually untouchable. This obscurity created a major problem for resistance movements, as activists must be able to identify the “man behind the curtain” in order to develop strategies that will pressure “him” – a prospect made even more difficult by the fact that “the man” is often several thousand miles behind the curtain.

The hypermobility of the global assembly line further complicated this task, as corporate proxies could move, or threaten to move, their operations if they felt pressured to improve working conditions.<sup>16</sup>

## THE GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

This evolution in global power required a parallel evolution in organizational strategy. The most notable application of such a strategy was the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico. In response to the 1994 implementation of NAFTA, indigenous rebels took up arms and declared their independence from the Mexican state. Although outmatched militarily, the Zapatistas (EZLN) were able to gather mass support, both throughout Mexico and internationally, via the internet. As a result, the Mexican government refrained from an all-out assault. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink call this strategy the “boomerang pattern.” By sending *out* information, the Zapatistas were able to apply pressure on their opposition *from behind*. In this case, public outcry and media attention directed at the Mexican government limited its ability to use force. And while this was not the first use of such a strategy, the Zapatistas’ application had some peculiar components. Not only was it among the first notable examples of successful, internet-based organizing, the Zapatistas also represented a decidedly post-Cold War movement. Rather than attempting to take over the Mexican state, the EZLN instead sought autonomy from it. They also explicitly rejected any notion of vanguardism or leadership in a worldwide revolutionary movement and instead called for a movement of movements that could cooperate horizontally, as equals.<sup>17</sup>

While many organizations formed to provide direct assistance and solidarity to the Zapatista struggle, the more important legacy of Zapatismo has been its deliberately indirect influence on other movements. The EZLN's application of democratic principles, autonomy, and broad coalition-building resonated with many activists around the world. Rather than take orders from Chiapas, they adapted these values and practices to their own struggles. In many cases, activists may not have even been aware of the source of this influence.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most famous example of Zapatismo's resonance was a series of protests surrounding the 1999 meeting of the WTO in Seattle, Washington. While the EZLN had responded to globalization by refusing to participate in a corporate-controlled Mexican nation-state, protestors in Seattle physically challenged the WTO's ability to make governing decisions. Under the organizational leadership of the Direct Action Network (DAN), environmental activists, students, fair trade advocates, labor unions, indigenous rights activists, anarchists, and others converged on Seattle, Washington, and effectively shut down a meeting of the WTO. While often considered separate movements, these groups worked together to shut down intersections, block delegates' access to meetings, and generally occupy the city's streets with marches and rallies. Like the Zapatistas, these groups attempted to work together in a democratic manner. Rather than taking orders from a few leaders, the Seattle actions were organized in a way that respected participants' autonomy and allowed for a diversity of tactics (within a general agreement of non-violence). Much of the coordination was done via the internet, specifically through e-mail and *Indymedia*, a democratic online news bulletin board created for this purpose. Additionally, many of the actual methods used to shut down the

convention borrowed heavily from those that had been perfected by groups like Earth First!, Reclaim the Streets, and ACT UP. Like these earlier groups, DAN and others also attempted to create a light-hearted atmosphere and provide compelling visuals through the use of puppets and theatrics.<sup>19</sup>

A third significant example of global justice activism was that of United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), particularly their campus-based, anti-sweatshop campaigns in the late 1990s and early 2000s. USAS formed in 1998 as a student off-shoot of the labor union UNITE (which traces its own history back to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, founded in 1900). Contrary to typical union models, however, USAS served as a decentralized network of student anti-sweatshop groups, not as a monolithic entity. Although the organization eventually established a national office with paid staff, the relationships between its member groups were horizontal; they shared successful organizing models and coordinated national actions, but they otherwise operated autonomously.

While the EZLN seceded from the global capitalist system, and Seattle protestors disrupted the institutions that maintained it, USAS answered the globalization dilemma that I outlined earlier: in a complex and decentralized supply chain, who can be held accountable for sweatshop conditions? USAS activists responded to this question by being the second step in boomerang pattern. Realizing that they could have little direct effect on distant factories, activists instead tackled the problem locally, on their own college campuses. Specifically, they took advantage of what Naomi Klein calls "branding." As Klein argues in *No Logo*, in modern advertising, brand names and logos have become more important than the products they represent. Through sponsorship of



“cool” events (like rock concerts), association with celebrities, and non-traditional, often subversive ad campaigns, these corporate brands seek to establish themselves as identities. They represent lifestyles, not just consumer goods.<sup>20</sup>

Particularly in relation to their athletics programs, American universities, too, have established themselves as “brand name” products. Through considerable investments in their logos and related public imagery, universities used their “brand” to sell collegiate apparel, barter lucrative athletic contracts with companies like Nike and Reebok, and encourage donations from corporations and wealthy alumni. By the late 1990s, the estimated value of the collegiate apparel industry was \$2.5 billion.<sup>21</sup>

So although universities maintained virtually anonymous bureaucracies, allowing students little direct access to decision-making processes, their “brand” made them publicly vulnerable. In the words of John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance president David D’Alessandro, “It can take 100 years to build up a good brand and 30 days to knock it down.”<sup>22</sup> Exploiting this vulnerability, USAS activists used protest, civil disobedience, and effective media campaigns to focus public attention on the working conditions that produced university apparel. Like the lunch counter sit-ins of the early 1960s, the attention from these actions created a decision dilemma for administrators. Because public embarrassment threatened to soil their universities’ brand names, many university administrators were compelled to establish labor standards for their apparel. As of 2012, USAS had convinced over 180 colleges and universities to affiliate with the Worker Rights Consortium, an organization that monitors apparel factories.<sup>23</sup>

USAS activists also played key roles in other solidarity struggles, including campaigns by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) in the early 2000s. In March

2005, Florida farm workers and their allies ended a four-year boycott of Yum! Brands (the parent company of Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken, A&W, Pizza Hut, and Long John Silver's). In exchange, Yum!, the largest restaurant corporation in the world, granted the workers a roughly 75 percent raise and agreed to work with them directly to combat slavery in Florida fields. During the campaign, which specifically targeted Taco Bell, the CIW adapted many of the organizing methods popularized by struggles in Chiapas and in Seattle, specifically the use of broad, horizontal coalitions. However, the ideas that resonated within CIW campaigns were not limited to these immediate predecessors.

#### THE COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS

The David and Goliath nature of a group of perhaps 2,500 seasonally rotating workers—primarily Mexican and Guatemalan immigrants with no formally recognized bargaining rights—making demands of such a powerful corporation, particularly following decades of devastating defeats for organized labor, has earned the CIW international acclaim. Very little about the CIW's methods was new, however. In fact, the group is notable for having built on so *many* precedents. The CIW's insistence on an autonomous, democratic, and relatively horizontal internal structure, for example, drew heavily from the EZLN uprising and paralleled a larger movement of similarly-structured worker centers throughout the U.S. during the same period. The group's use of hunger strikes and city-to-city marches, as well as their boycott strategy, harkened back to previous campaigns by the United Farm Workers (UFW) and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). Even their alliances with student organizations built on more than

fifty years of solidarity work on U.S. college campuses, including USAS' campaigns in the late 1990s.<sup>24</sup>

The CIW began organizing in 1993, during what Janice Fine describes as the “second wave” of worker centers in the United States. Somewhat akin to anarchist infoshops, worker centers served a variety of functions. In addition to providing information and meeting spaces, they promoted leadership development, popular education, and coalition-building among community organizations. Unlike labor unions, worker centers were typically locally based and operate independently “both from each other as well as from other national organizations [and] networks.”<sup>25</sup> But though autonomous by design, and run democratically by the communities they serve, worker centers often maintained working relationships with labor unions and religious organizations.<sup>26</sup>

Like SNCC, Earth First!, and 924 Gilman Street, the CIW drew on the horizontal organizing models of historical predecessors such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), in addition to those of the EZLN. The education-based approach to empowerment illustrated in their organizing mantra, “consciousness + commitment = change,” was vital to the group’s survival, as the seasonal rotation of farm workers meant a constant flux and turnover in membership. CIW members also lacked a common language, so their efforts at popular education often depended on skits and drawings.<sup>27</sup>

Before its “Fair Food” campaign in 2001, the CIW had focused primarily on immediate targets. For example, the group confronted abusive crew bosses and launched undercover investigations that led to the prosecution of five agricultural slavery rings. The group also organized a 230-mile march from Ft. Meyers to Orlando and a month-

long hunger strike by six of its members. By the end of the 1990s, the group had compelled their employers, the Six L's Packing Company, to raise long-falling wages back to pre-1980s levels. In addition to these tangible gains, the CIW also built important alliances with more privileged groups, including religious congregations, student activists, and labor unions, which played a vital role in the campaign against Taco Bell.<sup>28</sup>

For just as the Zapatistas' were unable to confront the Mexican army directly, by the late 1990s, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers exhausted their ability to make further demands of the Six L's Packing Company directly. Instead, the CIW developed a boomerang strategy that pressured Six L's by targeting one of its main purchasers, Taco Bell, which was more vulnerable to public pressure.<sup>29</sup>

This specific strategy, known as a secondary boycott because it targets someone other than an immediate employer, had successful historical precedents among American farmworkers, most notably the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA, which eventually became the United Farm Workers) in the 1960s and 1970s and FLOC a decade later. In order to pressure vineyard owner Schenley Industries, the NFWA organized a boycott that eventually spread to companies including Cutty Sark liquor, Chiquita bananas, and Safeway grocery. Schenley ultimately agreed to recognize the union, and several other grape growers and wine makers followed suit, in order to avoid similar campaigns. Similarly, FLOC launched a successful campaign against Vlasic pickles' cucumber growers through parent company Campbell's Soup. The victory gave FLOC the leverage to force an additional agreement with the H.J. Heinz Company.<sup>30</sup>

The CIW built on these models, but they adapted them to include some important basic principles. Most notably, the group not only insisted on their own autonomy, and as a result rejected offers to become a subsidiary of UFW or FLOC, but they also insisted on the autonomy of their allies. So while the CIW focused their efforts on coordinating annual awareness tours, protests at Yum! headquarters, and attention from national media outlets, their allies pursued their own independent strategies. This insistence on freedom of action proved vitally important, as it allowed participating groups to frame the issue in their own way and adopt strategies that played to their strengths.

Sympathetic unions, for example, framed the CIW struggle as a labor issue. They encouraged their members to participate in the boycott and provided the CIW with important logistical assistance. Allied church groups, meanwhile, focused their campaign around the moral issue of slavery. They spread the boycott congregation to congregation and received important public endorsements from powerful national organizations. Student activists, meanwhile, recognizing their status as Taco Bell's target market, launched a campaign called "Boot the Bell," which sought to expel the restaurant from high school and college campuses. By pressuring Yum! Brands from all of these angles, the CIW and their allies kept the company on the defensive. Yum! could not respond to the variety of attacks with only one public relations campaign; however, responding to each individually eventually proved costly.<sup>31</sup>

## BOOTING THE BELL

Student solidarity movements have a long history in the United States. During the 1960s, Civil Rights groups such as SNCC and CORE pursued strategic alliances at

northern universities, leading to the establishment of SDS, among other groups, and culminating in the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer. Many of the political developments at northern universities during this period, including the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and the 1968 Columbia University strike, were directly influenced by these relationships. During the 1980s and 1990s, student activists compelled dozens of major universities to disinvest from apartheid South Africa and sever ties with the University of Arizona's telescope project at Mt. Graham (as outlined in Chapter 2).

The CIW's allied student wing, the Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA), however, was most intimately influenced by USAS, who had so excelled at finding pressure points in university bureaucracies. The SFA adopted an organizational structure very similar to USAS, and indeed the two groups overlapped both in membership and with shared campaigns. Following USAS' horizontal network approach, student groups on campuses throughout the United States worked on the SFA Taco Bell campaign, adopting successful methods from one another and coordinating national protests. SFA groups also followed USAS' model for confronting the power structures at their respective universities. They dissected complicated university bureaucracies in order to apply direct pressure on key decision-makers, and they targeted schools publicly, as brands. During the "Boot the Bell" campaign, some SFA activists also built on past USAS victories directly, using membership in the Worker Rights Consortium as a policy reference point to which they could hold their universities accountable.

When Yum! Brands reached agreement with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in March 2005, SFA groups at twenty-two schools, including UCLA, Portland State University, and the University of Chicago, had succeeded at either cutting or preventing

contracts with Taco Bell. SFA campaigns were active at roughly 300 colleges and fifty high schools, and, importantly, that number had been steadily growing. This mounting pressure eventually compelled Taco Bell to agree to CIW demands rather than risk spoiling its brand reputation among its most important target audience. The “Boot the Bell” campaigns at the University of Texas and the University of Notre Dame show how students attempted to expel Taco Bell from their schools as well as how corporate and university officials responded to their efforts. While student activists at the University of Texas were ultimately unable to remove Taco Bell from their student union, the Notre Dame campaign resulted in the university severing Taco Bell’s sponsorship of their football post-game show. Both campaigns put Taco Bell on the defensive, but students at Notre Dame were more successful at forcing the hands of administrative officials.<sup>32</sup>

The University of Texas (UT) campaign against Taco Bell started in 2001. In December, members of the campus Green Party protested and distributed literature about the CIW in front of the campus restaurant, in conjunction with actions in thirty other states. The following October, Green Party members held another demonstration, complete with tomato costumes, which also coincided with similar activities elsewhere. Over the course of the next year, students began meeting with representatives of Aramark, the company contracted by UT to oversee all campus food outlets. By November 2003, the student coalition had broadened to include not only the campus Green Party but also global justice groups like Accion Zapatista and Resist FTAA! In conjunction with a campus visit by CIW members, students held another rally and introduced a resolution to the student government that, if passed, would have encouraged the administration to cut ties with Taco Bell. The resolution failed without debate,

however, and student government representatives were seen “working on papers [and] picking their finger nails” during its presentation.<sup>33</sup> Although activists at UT were able to attract publicity, they reached dead ends with both their representatives and the company that held the campus Taco Bell contract.<sup>34</sup>

The following school year, the SFA campaign at UT reached its peak. Under the leadership of the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP), the campaign grew to include the support of thirty-five other student organizations. Inspired by a recent SFA victory at UCLA, student activists presented the Texas Union Board of Directors, the administrative body responsible for contracting with Aramark, with a petition of over 1,000 signatories. Unmoved, board chairwoman Nada Antoun responded that removing Taco Bell would be a “disservice to the students.”<sup>35</sup> CIW members again visited the campus, and activists began flooding the school newspaper with letters of support for the campaign. In addition to opinion pieces by students, Austin-area ministers also submitted a letter, noting support for the boycott by religious groups and quoting former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson’s condemnation of Taco Bell’s role in “profiting by exploitation.”<sup>36</sup>

In response, Dirk Dozier and Don Barton, respectively CEO and Vice President of Human Resources for Austaco, the company that directly owned the Union Taco Bell and several others in Central Texas, began their own media campaign. In February, as the Union Board was gearing up to vote on the issue, Dozier published an opinion piece in the school newspaper defending Six L’s as “a very good organization,” condemning student and community activists, and asking, “Where is the concern for the tax-paying, wage-earning U.S. citizens – employees of our company – who potentially will lose their



jobs for the sake of Florida Immokalee farm workers?” But while Dozier, like Antoun, saw the benefits in exploiting farm workers, he did not explain why a one cent per pound raise for tomato pickers would cause other workers to lose their jobs. Don Barton, meanwhile, maintained that by representing only 68 of the 6,000 Taco Bell restaurants in the US, Austaco was in no position to influence the company. More importantly, Barton also argued that the UT Taco Bell franchise did not buy tomatoes from Six L’s and thus was “far removed from what [the CIW was] trying to do.” Unswayed, SLAP activists responded that they had never used Six L’s in their literature or demands and that the franchise nonetheless benefited from its connection to Taco Bell, a company whose success had come on the backs of CIW laborers. Barton admitted that representing and benefiting from the parent company was “why you become a franchise,” and he further acknowledged that he had no information on the conditions of the workers who did pick the franchise’s tomatoes. Despite these contradictions, the Union Board moved to vote on Taco Bell’s future at the end of February, and Antoun continued to cite the restaurant’s potential removal as a disservice to students who were “strapped due to tuition increases.”<sup>37</sup>

Before the vote, SLAP published additional opinion pieces in the newspaper, and a local church held a public forum on the topic. When the group’s members realized that the board would rule against them, they attempted to withdraw their resolution. The Union Board opted to vote anyway, however, and during the debate, SLAP activists held up 36 signs, each with the name of a supporting student organization. The board voted unanimously to keep Taco Bell but stipulated that Six L’s would be banned from operating at UT – a non-issue given that Six L’s already did not. Though the board ended

the students' campaign anticlimactically, their decision ultimately did not matter, as Yum! Brands reached an agreement with the CIW the next week. SLAP and their allies ultimately could not sway either their administration or their own government representatives, but their actions exposed some of the bigger issues confronted by the campaign.<sup>38</sup>

Despite Taco Bell's name recognition and seemingly singular identity, the structure of the company was actually quite complicated. Its distribution and licensing network included other powerful corporations such as Aramark and Austaco. Similarly, the hierarchy of the university also included a variety of powerful decision-making bodies. The problems that the University of Texas students faced were not all structural, however; their campaign also revealed the nature of their opponents' positions. When put on the defensive, Union Board chairwoman Antoun effectively admitted that the exploitation of farm workers was a service to students, who themselves were being squeezed by the rising costs of college tuition. Austaco representatives provided a similar response, arguing that the conditions of workers who were not "tax-paying, wage-earning U.S. citizens" were of no concern to their company. Taco Bell apologists initially claimed either ignorance of farm workers' struggles or impotence to affect the situation. When pushed, however, they effectively admitted that their own financial gain was more important than the human costs. The more successful campaign at Notre Dame forced a similarly raw response from Taco Bell headquarters.

The SFA campaign at Notre Dame University, like its Texas counterpart, started in 2001. However, it reached its peak during the 2003-2004 school year. In September, members of the Progressive Student Alliance (PSA) met with Notre Dame General

Counsel Carol Kaesebier to discuss the university's affiliation with Taco Bell through a local franchisee's sponsorship of an official football post-game show. In March, after traveling to Kentucky for a protest at Yum! Brand's headquarters and visiting Immokalee over spring break, two PSA members, Melody Gonzales and Tony Rivas, participated in a Cesar Chavez day forum where they discussed their involvement in the campaign and their own fathers' experiences as migrant farm laborers. Rivas began a week-long hunger strike as a lead-up to a protest of Taco Bell.<sup>39</sup>

Importantly, PSA members also identified an additional leverage point with the university: Board of Trustees member Matt Gallo was the director of Gallo of Sonoma Winery, a company accused of unfair labor practices by the United Farm Workers. The SFA campaign at Notre Dame relied on articulating the contradictions between the school's mission and its relationship to Taco Bell. By targeting Gallo, student activists presented a pattern of worker exploitation at the university, which allowed them to embarrass the university at very high levels and dismiss attempts to make the Taco Bell issue seem ambiguous.<sup>40</sup>

The publicity of Rivas' hunger strike and the subsequent protest, which were part of a national week of student actions, prompted responses from Notre Dame officials and from Taco Bell. University spokesperson Matthew Storin told the school newspaper that the fact that Rivas learned about migrant labor issues from a university seminar "should count as University awareness on some level."<sup>41</sup> Speaking on behalf of Taco Bell, Laurie Schalow claimed that the free market was to blame for produce prices, not the restaurant company. She also noted that Taco Bell's Supplier Code of Conduct specified a \$9 per hour minimum wage, though student activists quickly pointed out that tomato pickers

were paid by the bucket, not the hour. Undeterred by this dismissal, PSA members began a letter-writing campaign to University President Father Edward Malloy and launched a forty person hunger strike. After two weeks of sending letters, dozens of PSA members went to Malloy's office to hand-deliver more and to ask the administration for a public statement on the university's relationship with Taco Bell. Though the president's assistant told them that it was "not [Malloy's] style" to meet with students, Counselor to the President Father Peter Jarret did agree to discuss the PSA's conditions for ending their hunger strike.<sup>42</sup>

The administration agreed to investigate the students' concerns, but only after receiving an official response from Taco Bell. PSA members, identifying the university's delay tactics, expanded their hunger strike to include 126 students and published editorials that related their campaign to Notre Dame's membership with the USAS Workers Rights Consortium and accused the university of involvement in "a financial chain that exploits workers."<sup>43</sup> As the hunger strike escalated, Notre Dame officials demanded an immediate response from Taco Bell representatives, who had been using delay tactics of their own. A week later, Notre Dame announced that it would postpone negotiations for the renewal of its Taco Bell contract until the company provided its official explanation. Though President Malloy publicly thanked the students for bringing the issue to his attention, he stipulated that "it remains to be seen whether all their concerns were justified."<sup>44</sup> Anxious to maintain a business-friendly appearance, he said the university would not rush to judge Taco Bell before hearing their side of the argument.<sup>45</sup>

In August 2004, the deadline for renewing the annual sponsorship contract passed without the university receiving a sufficient response from Taco Bell. As PSA declared victory, university spokesperson Matt Storin, cautious not to reveal that students had pressured the administration into making a decision, thanked students for bringing up the issue “in a very responsible and studied way.”<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Notre Dame campaign to boot Taco Bell succeeded for several reasons. Chief among them were the students’ abilities to articulate the contradiction between the school’s mission and their association with the company, connect that relationship to other labor issues at Notre Dame, and, perhaps most importantly, threaten the image of the school’s football program. The Texas campaign, by contrast, failed because students were unable to identify or apply pressure on the necessary decision-making body. Student activists remained public and active for the full four-year campaign, but their attempts to influence various governing bodies never produced the desired results. However, the “pressure from all sides” strategy of the CIW’s conflict with Yum! allowed the group to benefit even from unsuccessful campaigns by their allies. Even though UT’s Taco Bell remained open, the public reactions of franchisees demonstrated the pressure they felt from student activists.

These campaigns demonstrate the difficulties activists faced while confronting elaborate bureaucracies, such as those of American universities. Just as they had during the defense of Mt. Graham campaign and in various USAS campaigns, student activists were tasked with determining who the key decision-makers were and then developing

strategies to pressure them. This process was complicated by the corporatization of American campuses, which included both an increased corporate presence and the adoption of corporate models of organization. Outside of the university, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers similarly faced a production chain which included an elaborate web of farms, distributors, and subcontractors, as well as Taco Bell's own labyrinth of franchisees, subcontractors, and the like. In order to identify and exploit the right pressure points, the CIW and their allies looked to historical examples and built on the models of more recently successful campaigns. The combination of all of these efforts eventually forced Yum! to grant the desired concessions, and the CIW has since reached similar agreements with several other companies, including McDonald's, Burger King, Whole Foods, Subway, Trader Joe's, and Chipotle.

The CIW, like the EZLN, USAS, DAN, and other global justice organizations, offered an important step beyond the defensive direct action of the 1980s era groups. Though still largely reactive in nature, these groups formed broad, transnational coalitions that united environmental, labor, and human rights activists in opposition to specific, undemocratic policies. The CIW, from a position of relative powerlessness, confronted an employer, Six L's Packing Company, which was effectively immune to the public protest. The group responded by selecting a more vulnerable, albeit also more powerful, target in Yum! Brands. By developing relationships with more privileged allies and allowing those allies to operate autonomously, the CIW was able to pressure Yum! from several different directions. This was key, as university bureaucracies and national corporate supply chains had been organized in a way that minimized their exposure to outside pressure. Larger global networks in the era of NAFTA and the WTO

functioned in much the same way; the vulnerabilities of global capitalism became increasingly decentralized. However, as the CIW's campaigns illustrated, even powerful, decentralized opponents have vulnerabilities that can be engaged from multiple angles; activists must think globally and take action everywhere.

Importantly, while backlash and repression from elites were constants, the global justice organizations of the 1990s generally operated within a cultural context in which most Americans were receptive (or at least not openly hostile) to human rights concerns. After all, even "free trade" was typically framed as benefit for the world's poor. As a result, associating corporations with human right abuses applied pressure by threatening to tarnish their brand names. In contrast, the peace movement that followed during the "War on Terror" of the 2000s, faced a culture of widespread fear and unquestioning obedience in which appeals to humanity fell flat.

- <sup>1</sup> Bill Clinton, moments before signing NAFTA into law. National Archives and Records Administration, Office of the Federal Register, William J. Clinton, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, William J. Clinton, 1993, Bk. 2, August 1 to December 31, 1993* (Government Printing Office), 2142.
- <sup>2</sup> Statements made at the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Awards Ceremony, November 20, 2003, [http://blogs.nysut.org/sttp/files/2010/11/speaktruth\\_benitez.pdf](http://blogs.nysut.org/sttp/files/2010/11/speaktruth_benitez.pdf) (accessed August 1, 2012).
- <sup>3</sup> Howard J. Wiarda, "The U.S. Domestic Politics of the U.S.-Mexico Free Trade Agreement," in *The NAFTA Debate: Grappling with Unconventional Trade Issues*, ed. M. Delal Baer and Sidney Weintraub (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 121, 130-131; Hermann von Bertrab, *Negotiating NAFTA: A Mexican Envoy's Account* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 30.
- <sup>4</sup> Wayne A. Cornelius, "Death at the Border: Efficacy and Unintended Consequences of US Immigration Control Policy," *Population and Development Review* 27, No. 4 (December 2001): 661, 669-670; Barry Estabrook, *Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit* (Riverside, NJ: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2012), xv, 75-100.
- <sup>5</sup> Saskia Sassen, "Global Cities and Survival Circuits," in *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, ed. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), 267.
- <sup>6</sup> Johann Hari, "It's Not Just Dominique Strauss-Kahn. The IMF Itself Should Be On Trial," *The Independent*, June 3, 2011.
- <sup>7</sup> Jorn Madslie, "Debt Relief Hopes Bring Out the Critics," *BBC News*, June 29, 2005; Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 53-88.
- <sup>8</sup> "The Ten Year Track Record of the North American Free Trade Agreement: U.S. Workers' Jobs, Wages, and Economic Security," Public Citizen, February 2004, [http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA\\_10\\_jobs.pdf](http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA_10_jobs.pdf) (accessed May 22, 2012); Henry A. Giroux, "The Terror of Neoliberalism: Rethinking the Significance of Cultural Politics," *College Literature* 32, No.1 (Winter, 2005): 3. For more on the significance of media mergers, see Ben Bagdikian, *The New Media Monopoly: A Completely Revised and Updated Edition with Seven New Chapters* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); C. Edwin Baker, *Media Concentration and Democracy: Why Ownership Matters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 76-87. On the roles of Bush and Clinton, see John R. MacArthur, *The Selling of "Free Trade": NAFTA, Washington, and the Subversion of American Democracy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 58-166.
- <sup>9</sup> "The Ten Year Track Record of the North American Free Trade Agreement: The Mexican Economy, Agriculture, and the Environment," Public Citizen, February 2004, [http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA\\_10\\_mexico.pdf](http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA_10_mexico.pdf) (accessed May 22, 2012).
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.; Bill Ong Hing, *Ethical Borders: NAFTA, Globalization, and Mexican Migration* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2010), 9-28.
- <sup>11</sup> Corp Watch, "Maquiladora Industry Fact Sheet," October 20, 1999, Acc. #5177-3, Box 1, Folder 77, WTO Seattle Collection, University of Washington (Seattle, WA); Evelyn Nieves, "To Work and Die in Juárez," *Mother Jones*, May/June 2002; Molly E. Moore, "Nightmare in a City of Dreams," *Washington Post*, July 2000, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/photo/onassignment/juarez/> (accessed May 22, 2012); Jessica Livingston, "Murder in Juárez: Gender, Sexual Violence, and the Global Assembly Line," *Frontiers—A Journal of Women's Studies*, 25 (January 2004): 59-76; "The Ten Year Track Record of the North American Free Trade Agreement: The Mexican Economy, Agriculture, and the Environment," Public Citizen, February 2004, [http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA\\_10\\_mexico.pdf](http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA_10_mexico.pdf) (accessed May 22, 2012); Wayne A. Cornelius, "Death at the Border," 661, 669-670; Tim Vanderpool, "Price of Admission: Along the Border, Sexual Assault Has Become Routine," *Tucson Weekly*, June 5, 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> "The Ten Year Track Record of the North American Free Trade Agreement: U.S. Workers' Jobs, Wages, and Economic Security," Public Citizen, February 2004, [http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA\\_10\\_jobs.pdf](http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA_10_jobs.pdf) (accessed May 22, 2012); "The Ten Year Track Record of the North American Free Trade Agreement: U.S., Mexican and Canadian Farmers and Agriculture," Public Citizen, February 2004, [http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA\\_10\\_ag.pdf](http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA_10_ag.pdf) (accessed May 22, 2012).
- <sup>13</sup> "The Ten Year Track Record of the North American Free Trade Agreement: Undermining Sovereignty and Democracy," Public Citizen, February 2004, [http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA\\_10\\_democracy.pdf](http://www.citizen.org/documents/NAFTA_10_democracy.pdf) (accessed May 22, 2012).



<sup>14</sup> “The World Trade Organization vs. The Environment, Public Health, and Human Rights,” International Forum on Globalization, 2003, <http://www.ifg.org/pdf/cancun/issues-WTOvsEnv.pdf> (retrieved May 22, 2012); Lori Wallach and Michelle Sforza, *Whose Trade Organization? Corporate Globalization and the Erosion of Democracy* (Washington, DC: Public Citizen, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Paul Hawken, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming* (New York: Viking Press, 2007), 117-122, 127-131; Juliette Beck and Kevin Danaher, “Top Ten Reasons to Oppose the World Trade Organization,” in *Globalize This!*, ed. Kevin Danaher and Roger Burbach (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2000), 98-102; Valentine M. Moghadam, “Bringing the Third World In: A Comparative Analysis of Gender and Restructuring,” in *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies*, ed., Valentine M. Moghadam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 337; *Life and Debt*, directed by Stephanie Black, New Yorker Films, 2003; Saskia Sassen, “Global Cities and Survival Circuits,” in *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, ed. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (New York: Henry Holt, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> *The Global Assembly Line*, directed by Lorraine W. Gray, New Day Films, 1986. Theorizing the global power structure has become a contested topic, most notably revolving around the controversial work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri present global capital is neither a spontaneous, natural development nor a conspiracy orchestrated by a single power center. Empire, they argue, “establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a *decentered* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers [italics in original]. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), xii. In other words, global capital does not recognize borders and differs from imperialism in that there is no center from which power is exercised; empire is everywhere. Other scholars, including Ellen Meiksins Wood dismiss Hardt and Negri’s narrative of the declining power of states, rejecting what she calls “a new form of stateless ‘sovereignty’ that is everywhere and nowhere.”<sup>16</sup> According to Wood, “the world today is more than ever a world of nation-states...the very essence of globalization is a global economy administered by a global system of multiple states and local sovereignties, structured in a complex relation of domination and subordination. Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Empire of Capital* (London: Verso, 2003), 6, 141. Samir Amin echoes this dismissal of Hardt and Negri, arguing that rather than an end of imperialism, the world is merely experiencing a new “collective imperialism” in the form of a “triad of the United States, Europe, and Japan.” Samir Amin, *The World We Wish to See: Revolutionary Objectives in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008), 30.

<sup>17</sup> Tom Hayden, “In Chiapas,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2002), 76-79; Luis Hernández Navarro, “Mexico’s Secret War,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden, 63-65; Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 8, 12-14; Gabriel García Márquez and Cambio, “Marcos Speaks,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden, 182; Elizabeth “Betita” Martínez and Anoldo García, “What is Zapatismo? A Brief Definition for Activists” and Manuel Callahan, “Zapatismo Beyond Chiapas” in *Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World*, ed. David Solnit (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 2004), 213-216, 217-228.

<sup>18</sup> Alex Khasnabish calls this influence between movements “resonance.” Alex Khasnabish, *Zaptismo Beyond Borders: New Imaginations of Political Possibility* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 22-24, 123-128.

<sup>19</sup> Starhawk, “How We Really Shut Down the WTO,” in *Webs of Power: Notes From the Global Uprising* (Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2002), 16-20; Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk, ed., *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization* (New York: Verso, 2012), 290-297.

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CHAPTER 5:  
GLOBALIZATION, PART 2: THE “WAR ON TERROR”  
AND THE GLOBAL PEACE MOVEMENT

← Bush Administration

Project for the New American Century  
Halliburton  
Blackwater  
Clear Channel

2000s Anti-War Movement →

ANSWER

United for Peace and Justice  
Code Pink  
Gold Star Families for Peace  
Iraq Veterans Against the War

I can't tell you if the use of force in Iraq today would last five days, or five weeks, or five months, but it certainly isn't going to last any longer than that.

- Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense<sup>1</sup>

And that's why the thugs in Iraq still resist us, because they can't stand the thought of free societies. They understand what freedom means. See, free nations are peaceful nations. Free nations don't attack each other. Free nations don't develop weapons of mass destruction.

- George W. Bush, President of the United States<sup>2</sup>

In September 2000, a conservative think tank called the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) released a report entitled, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces, and Resources for a New Century.” In it, PNAC calls for a broad re-tooling of the US military and identifies potential targets, namely Iran, Iraq, and North Korea –the countries President George W. Bush later called the “Axis of Evil” in his 2002 State of the Union Address. Unfortunately, PNAC lamented, the massive funding that would be required to pursue such military expansion was unlikely to be provided “absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.”<sup>3</sup> A year later, however, just such an event occurred, when hijacked airplanes crashed in New York City; Shanksville, Pennsylvania; and Washington, D.C., killing nearly 3,000 people. PNAC had been advocating for the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein since the late 1990s, and the September 11 attacks provided an excuse to renew its call, even though there was no known connection between Hussein and the hijackers.<sup>4</sup>

Following an invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, the Bush Administration, which included PNAC members Donald Rumsfeld, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, and Paul Wolfowitz, shifted its focus to attacking Iraq. Over the eight years of formal occupation, from March 2003 to December 2011, at least 66,000 Iraqi civilians were killed; most estimates are much higher. Over two million Iraqis were displaced inside the country, while another two million sought refuge in Syria and Jordan. More than 4,000 US soldiers were also killed, in addition to 30,000 wounded and a rapidly growing number of suicides. An estimated one third of veterans suffer from psychological injuries, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and severe depression. The on-going occupation

of Afghanistan, meanwhile, has produced an additional 10,000-50,000 civilian casualties, 2,000 US soldiers killed, and 10,000 wounded.<sup>5</sup>

## NEOLIBERALISM IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

George W. Bush became the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States in 2001, despite having received half a million fewer votes than his opponent. The election was highly contentious, and it was ultimately decided by Bush's 537 vote victory in Florida, where his brother Jeb was governor. During the Florida elections, tens of thousands of African Americans were denied their voting rights, and the state's voting machines also failed to read nearly 200,000 ballots – disproportionately within areas with large African-American populations. Despite these inconsistencies, however, the US Supreme Court rejected requests for hand recounts and upheld Bush's victory. Though lacking a mandate from American voters, and having campaigned as a “compassionate conservative,” Bush aggressively pursued the neoliberal project, slashing taxes and government services, privatizing public assets, and further de-regulating industry.<sup>6</sup>

In his first year in office, Bush signed the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act, cutting roughly \$1 trillion in tax revenue over the following decade. Two years later, he signed the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act, cutting an additional \$800 billion over ten years. As the first of these cuts was being debated in April 2001, the Heritage Foundation issued a report arguing that “even with increased spending,” Bush's tax cuts would “effectively pay off the federal debt” in the following decade.<sup>7</sup> In other words, these massive tax cuts would so stimulate the economy that trillions of dollars in additional revenue could be expected. Instead, however, the

combination of tax cuts and increased spending actually doubled the debt during that period. And despite the names given to the Bush tax cuts, much of the benefit went to the richest Americans, while Bush's job creation numbers were the worst of any US president since World War II.<sup>8</sup>

Bush's tax cuts were an example of the conservative strategy of "starving the beast," or deliberately cutting revenue in order to justify subsequent cuts to public services. Indeed, Bush admitted in 2001 that he hoped his tax cuts would be a "fiscal straightjacket for Congress."<sup>9</sup> Bush ultimately did not commit himself to the same asylum, however, instead greatly expanding government expenses in areas such as the military and the domestic surveillance apparatus.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to providing massive tax cuts, the Bush Administration also pursued an expansive agenda of de-regulation and corporatization. For example, Bush's landmark education bill, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), funneled federal education dollars from schools to tutoring corporations. Most notoriously, in the first few months of Bush's first term, Vice President Dick Cheney held a series of secretive meetings with lobbyists and other representatives of American coal, mining, and oil companies in order to construct the administration's energy policies. The Energy Task Force's requests eventually became a proposal that Republican Senator John McCain called the "no lobbyist left behind bill."<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, with lukewarm support in segments of both parties, environmental groups like Friends of the Earth and the Sierra Club mobilized their members to pressure their representatives. They were able to defeat the bill on multiple occasions during Bush's first term. In 2005, however, the energy bill passed, allotting \$6 billion in subsidies for oil and gas companies, \$9 billion for coal companies,

and \$12 billion for nuclear power. The bill also allowed exemptions to the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act for companies obtaining natural gas through hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.” The primary beneficiary of this exemption was Halliburton, Cheney’s former employer.<sup>12</sup>

Among the key members of the Energy Task Force was Kenneth Lay, CEO of energy giant Enron. As the largest donor to the Bush campaign, Lay enjoyed considerable access to the White House, and the administration continued to defend his company up until its collapse that Fall. Enron’s ethical and financial bankruptcy reveals much about the philosophy of the Bush Administration, and it was, no doubt, a very public embarrassment to them. However, it also revealed something deeper about the emptiness of America’s de-regulated economy.<sup>13</sup>

When Enron folded in December 2001, its crashing stock took with it the savings of many of its workers, as well as the pensions of California and New York state employees. As the seventh largest US multinational corporation, Enron had been presented as a safe investment. In fact, for the previous six years in a row, *Fortune* magazine had declared Enron “America’s Most Innovative Company,” and indeed they were, though not likely in the way the writers at *Fortune* had thought. Enron’s fraud was immense; while claiming over \$100 billion in annual revenue, the company quarantined and hid its debts within its many, many subsidiaries. Enron was also able to use its substantial clout to gain regulatory exemptions from the Clinton era Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in both 1993 and 1997, and the company took full advantage of the 1999 repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act. Ultimately, despite constituting the largest bankruptcy in American history at the time, with \$63 billion in assets, Enron’s



collapse was not treated as a “canary in the coalmine.” American elites continued to urge corporate consolidation and de-regulation, and Enron has since been eclipsed by the even greater failures of Worldcom (in 2002), Lehman Brothers (2008), Washington Mutual (2008), General Motors (2009), and CIT Group (2009) – and was nearly rivaled by those of Conseco (2002), Chrysler (2009), and MF Global (2011).<sup>14</sup>

In addition to taking direct advice from corporate heads, Bush also followed in the steps of Ronald Reagan, gutting federal agencies from within by appointing leaders who were openly hostile to their agency’s mission or tied to the industries they were expected to regulate. As Secretary of the Interior, Bush appointed Gale Norton, a former protégé of Reagan Interior Secretary James Watt while at the Mountain States Legal Foundation. Norton also served on Reagan’s Council on Environmental Quality and was a fellow at Stanford University’s conservative Hoover Institution. As expected, Norton used her position to cater to corporate interests. According to environmental activist Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.,

Norton signed off on a plan to open nearly 9 million acres of Alaska’s North Slope to oil and gas development, put the kibosh on a citizens’ panel to oversee the trans-Alaska pipeline, brushed aside a record 25,000 opposing comments to approve a Houston company’s request to embark on the largest oil and gas exploration project in Utah’s history, and pushed for oil and gas drilling in Wyoming’s Jack Morrow Hills.<sup>15</sup>

As Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Bush appointed J. Steven Griles, another former member of the Reagan Administration. As a high-ranking employee at National Environmental Strategies, Inc. (a lobbying firm for energy interests) and the United Company (a coal and mining corporation), his knowledge of the energy industry was intimate, making him a natural fit for Cheney’s Energy Task Force. Among his key contributions to the Bush Administration was to remove obstacles to mountaintop

removal mining for coal companies. Griles was later forced to resign, however, when it became apparent that he had been meeting with former clients, who paid him over \$1 million. Griles was also one of the many Republicans convicted in the scandal involving lobbyist Jack Abramoff; he was eventually sentenced to ten months in prison for offering to use his position to help Abramoff block construction of a casino.<sup>16</sup>

Many other Bush appointees also had intimate ties to the energy industry. Rebecca W. Watson, Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management, had been a lobbyist for the mining industry. Bennett Raley, Assistant Secretary of Water and Science, had been a mining lawyer and an active opponent of reauthorizing the Clean Water Act. Jeffrey D. Jarrett, Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, had been a coal company executive. President Bush himself had been the head of an oil exploration corporation, while Vice President Cheney was the former CEO of Halliburton and eventual Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was the former head of Chevron's Committee on Public Policy.<sup>17</sup>

Bush also recruited from prominent conservative think tanks. At least twenty American Enterprise Institute (AEI) fellows served in his administration, and AEI also later hired Bush's ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton. Bolton, also affiliated with PNAC, had once suggested that the UN could lose ten stories' worth of its New York offices without making "a bit of difference."<sup>18</sup> Bush also recruited heavily from the Heritage Foundation, including Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao (wife of Senator Mitch McConnell), Angela Antonelli, Mark Wilson, Kay Coles James, Alvin Felzenberg, and Gale Norton. From the Federalist Society, an organization of conservative lawyers and judges, Bush appointed Attorney General John Ashcroft, Ted Olson, and Spencer Abram,

among others. Appointees affiliated with the anti-feminist Independent Women's Forum included Chao, Diana Furchgott-Roth, Anita Blair, and Jessica Gavora. These think tanks, in addition to developing policy, essentially trained and vetted an entire administration of ready to rule conservative officials.<sup>19</sup>

In the event that his appointments did not effectively debilitate the government's charter, however, Bush also maintained a veto. On his inauguration day, Bush put a freeze on all pending Clinton regulations and clamped down on regulatory approval through his Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). Congress had established the OIRA in 1980 in order to streamline paperwork and regulations, effectively allowing the President to overrule federal agencies' proposals if they were deemed detrimental to business. As a baseline figure, in the last two years of the Clinton Administration, an average of 20.5 proposed regulations were rejected by the OIRA. During Bush's first year, his OIRA rejected 172. And while that number tapered off in subsequent years, Bush's OIRA officials have been clear that they did not become more accommodating; rather, representatives of federal agencies merely stopped submitting new regulations, realizing that they had little chance of being implemented. Bush's EPA issued just three regulations during the first three years of his term. By comparison, Clinton's first three years produced thirty EPA regulations, and George H.W. Bush's first three years yielded twenty-one.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to Bush's neoliberal economic policies, his administration also promoted a number of conservative social policies. Perhaps most famously, Bush pressed for a massive increase in funding for "abstinence only" sexual education. As a part of his push for welfare reform, Bill Clinton had authorized \$50 million per year for

this censored curriculum; Bush tripled funding to \$176 million per year by 2006. But despite the more than \$1 billion of federal funding spent on abstinence only programs since 1982, a 2007 study for the Department of Health and Human Services found no statistical impact on the sexual behavior of American youth. However, several such curricula have been shown to include factually inaccurate information about pregnancy, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, and abortion.<sup>21</sup>

In 2001, Bush also established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) to transfer the government's social service obligations to religious organizations. By 2006, more than \$2 billion per year in federal funds were being funneled to such groups. During the 2004 presidential campaign, Bush also publicly advocated a constitutional amendment to ban "same sex" marriage, though the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act already established that same sex couples could not receive federal benefits and that US states were not required to recognize same sex marriages from other states.<sup>22</sup>

In many areas, whether de-regulation, public services, tax cuts, or privatization, the Bush Administration did not represent a departure from the practices of the Reagan and Clinton eras. Ronald Reagan had appointed industry insiders to undermine regulations and remake the government as a tool for business. Bill Clinton had approved "faith-based" initiatives, funded "abstinence only" sexual education, and signed the Defense of Marriage Act. His administration also helped Enron hide its fraud. Even more significantly, Clinton approved the media de-regulation that allowed Fox News and Clear Channel, Inc. to saturate US markets and endorsed the Wall Street de-regulation that played a key role in the global recession of 2008. But just as George H.W. Bush and

Bill Clinton had added free trade globalization to Reagan's model of rule, George W. Bush also added an additional layer to the neoliberal project. The Bush Administration's major neoliberal contribution was the "War on Terror," which greatly expanded the privatization of military services, forced business-friendly laws onto the Iraqi people, suspended civil liberties in the US, abandoned the accepted rules of armed conflict, and embraced a state of perpetual warfare. In the words of Vice President Dick Cheney, the War on Terror "may never end...at least not in our lifetime."<sup>23</sup>

## THE WAR

As early as January 2001, the Bush cabinet began discussing the invasion of Iraq. Eight months later, the tragedy of September 11 provided a relatively clear mandate for war on Afghanistan, but Saddam Hussein had not been involved. Though Dick Cheney told *Sixty Minutes* and *Meet the Press* viewers that 9/11 hijacker Mohamed Atta had met with Iraqi officials in Prague, US intelligence reports had already stated otherwise. Atta, in fact, was in the US when the Prague meeting allegedly occurred, and investigations have exposed the meeting as a likely hoax. Without a link between Hussein and 9/11, however, the administration was forced to find a different pretext for war – the imminent threat of an Iraqi attack.<sup>24</sup>

On the surface, presenting Iraq as a danger to the American people was absurd. During the first Iraq War, in 1991, US forces repelled the Iraqi military from Kuwait in a number of weeks. The UN, following the US' "Food for Oil" plan, then controlled Iraq's imports and its oil exports for more than a decade. The US, UK, and France also maintained "no fly zones" over much of the country. Iraq was contained in nearly every

sense. Saddam Hussein also made an awkward villain, as the United States had not only played a role in his rise to power but had also provided financial and military assistance, notably during the bloody 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, in which the US provided arms to both sides. Moreover, US military and financial support for Hussein continued even after the genocidal Al-Anfal campaign and the Halabja poison gas attacks against the Kurdish populations of Northern Iraq.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, while the 9/11 hijackers, as non-state actors, had targeted US civilians, the role of the US military in the world made state-sponsored attacks on the US extremely unlikely. According to the Department of Defense's own 2002 figures, the US operated at least 700 military bases in foreign countries, in addition to the thousands of bases on US territory. Author Chalmers Johnson, among others, notes that US forces are active in more than 130 countries. And while Saddam Hussein had indeed been a hostile neighbor and a violent head of state, the US had a far more extensive record of toppling democratically elected governments and supporting genocidal regimes, while engaged in non-stop military action since World War II. In addition to arming both the Hussein regime and the Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan, the US' list of military and CIA interventions since 1945 includes China, Italy, Greece, the Philippines, Korea, Albania, Iran, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Syria, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Haiti, Ecuador, the Congo, Brazil, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Indonesia, East Timor, Ghana, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, Australia, Angola, Zaire, Jamaica, Grenada, Morocco, Libya, Nicaragua, Panama, Bulgaria, and El Salvador, among others.<sup>26</sup>

But while 9/11 did not provide the excuse for invading Iraq that PNAC desired, the culture of fear surrounding the attacks did provide the necessary context for

presenting Iraq, devastated by two decades of war and economic sanctions, as a threat to the world's only superpower. Claiming that the Hussein regime possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and thus constituted a terrorist threat, the Bush Administration began ramping up support for an invasion under the banner of a worldwide "War on Terror."

In August 2002, Vice President Cheney announced, "We now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons...Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction."<sup>27</sup> A few months later, on the eve of the invasion in March 2003, President Bush used similar language, stating "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."<sup>28</sup> But while Bush and Cheney each used the phrase "no doubt," communicating absolute certainty, no such weapons were recovered.

Other Bush Administration officials were less concerned with guarantees than with perpetuating American fears of terrorist attacks. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, for example, told CNN that while there would always be uncertainty about Hussein's abilities to develop nuclear weapons, "we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."<sup>29</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, meanwhile, advised CBS' *Face the Nation* viewers to "Imagine a September 11 with weapons of mass destruction. It's not 3,000 [dead]. It's tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children."<sup>30</sup> For those still unconvinced, Cheney, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and Senator John McCain assured Americans that "like the people of France

in the 1940s,” Iraqis would greet the US military as liberators, while Rumsfeld assured that the use of force “certainly” would not last longer than five months.<sup>31</sup>

Though the Bush Administration’s campaign for American public support was based on deception, misinformation, and fearmongering, they did deliver on their promises to American corporations. In addition to routine defense contracts, the War on Terror took war profiteering to new levels through a privatization scheme that assigned military tasks to American businesses. According to the Department of Defense, military contracts for 2003 alone totaled over \$200 billion, nearly \$30 billion more than the year before. That year, Lockheed Martin, which makes about \$1 million per year in campaign contributions, received \$21.9 billion in defense contracts. Another \$17.3 billion went to Boeing, whose Chief Financial Officer was later imprisoned for bribing the Air Force’s chief weapons buyer for \$5 billion in preferential contracts. The Northrop Grumman Corporation, whose former Vice President James G. Roche served as Bush’s Secretary of the Air Force, received \$11.1 billion in contracts. Two years later, the company settled a \$62 million lawsuit with the US government for overcharging for its services. In addition to these giants of the American military-industrial complex, other defense contractors also made key contributions to the War on Terror. Among the most noteworthy were Halliburton, Blackwater, CACI International, and Titan.<sup>32</sup>

Halliburton, the top US contractor in Iraq, received \$3.9 billion in military contracts in 2003 to perform a variety of tasks, such as supplying oil for the military, building barracks, and providing meals. In 2004, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Halliburton had overcharged taxpayers by more than \$16 million by claiming to have served as many as 25,000 more meals per day than it actually had. A subsequent 2004



Pentagon audit found that the company's unsupported charges were as high as \$1.8 billion. Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown, and Root (KBR) was also implicated in the deaths of more than a dozen soldiers who were electrocuted while showering or swimming at KBR-built facilities. In 2009, prompted by allegations from KBR employee Jamie Leigh Jones that she was gang-raped by her co-workers, the US Senate passed the "Franken Amendment." The amendment barred defense contracts from companies, like KBR/Halliburton, that prevented workers from taking legal action on sexual crimes. All thirty of the Senators who voted against it were Republicans. By 2009, KBR's contracts for Afghanistan and Iraq totaled more than \$31 billion.<sup>33</sup>

Blackwater, meanwhile, received nearly \$1 billion from the US government to maintain a mercenary army of roughly 1,000 in Iraq. Like Halliburton, Blackwater fulfilled a number of duties that previously would have been performed by the US military itself, specifically the guarding and escort of key occupation officials. However, Blackwater was not accountable for its actions, as official US policy – specifically Coalition Provisional Authority Order #17– made contractors exempt from Iraqi law. In 2006, a drunken Blackwater operative killed the bodyguard of Iraqi Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi; rather than face murder charges, however, he was simply returned to the United States. A few months later, Blackwater snipers shot to death three guards at the Iraqi Media Network. Blackwater mercenaries were also linked to several other incidents involving the killing of Iraqi civilians, including a September 9, 2007 incident in which five Iraqis were killed and the infamous Nisour Square shootings a week later, in which seventeen civilians were killed. In an attempt to distance itself from the negative

publicity surrounding Nisour Square, the company has since changed its name, first to Xe Services in 2009, then to Academi in 2011.<sup>34</sup>

In many ways, Blackwater epitomized neoliberal warfare –privatized and without government regulation. Similarly, CACI International, with over \$1 billion in annual revenue, and the Titan Corporation, with more than \$2 billion per year, offered the privatization of human rights abuses. CACI and Titan provided interrogation and translation services for the US military at Abu Ghraib prison, where detainees were tortured, beaten, and raped. According to Major General Antonio Taguba, abuses by US soldiers and interrogators included:

Breaking chemical lights and pouring the phosphoric liquid on detainees; pouring cold water on naked detainees; beating detainees with a broom handle and a chair; threatening male detainees with rape; allowing a military police guard to stitch the wound of a detainee who was injured after being slammed against the wall in his cell; sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broom stick, and using military working dogs to frighten and intimidate detainees with threats of attack, and in one instance actually biting a detainee.<sup>35</sup>

In 2005, CACI announced plans to abandon interrogation work. The same year, Titan, which had just settled a \$28.5 million corruption case for bribing foreign officials, was purchased by L-3 Communications Holdings, Inc. for just under \$2 billion. In 2010, a US federal appeals court, citing the immunity of government contractors, dismissed a 2004 lawsuit against the two companies, which had been filed on behalf of Abu Ghraib torture victims.<sup>36</sup>

In 2007, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that while US troops in Iraq totaled 160,000, there were more than 180,000 contractors, not counting security companies like Blackwater. This privatized occupation, with its massive profits and zero accountability for corporations, in many ways mirrored the dynamics of Free Trade Zones and Mexican

*maquiladoras* under NAFTA. In this sense, the War on Terror was the extension of neoliberal globalization via military force. But the neoliberal model was not only integral to the US invasion and occupation, it was also forced upon the Iraqi people.<sup>37</sup>

Two months after the invasion, L. Paul Bremer III, head of the US Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), announced that Iraq was “open for business.”<sup>38</sup> Bremer’s statement was not merely a colloquialism, however. That September, Bremer implemented Order #39, which

announced that 200 Iraqi state companies would be privatized; decreed that foreign firms can retain 100 percent ownership of Iraqi banks, mines and factories; and allowed these firms to move 100 percent of their profits out of Iraq.<sup>39</sup>

This announcement defied Iraq’s constitution, which outlawed the privatization of state resources and the foreign ownership of Iraqi firms. As a result, US occupation policy also clearly violated long-standing international laws on warfare that had been ratified by the US government. Other executive edicts from the American “dictator of Iraq”<sup>40</sup> included Order #12, which suspended “all tariffs, customs duties, import taxes, licensing fees and similar surcharges for goods entering or leaving Iraq.”<sup>41</sup> Order #17, as mentioned earlier, granted immunity from Iraqi law to Coalition military personnel and private contractors. Orders #37 and #49 cut corporate taxes. Orders #80, #81, and #83 re-wrote Iraq’s copyright laws in order to meet the World Trade Organization’s standards for protecting corporations. Through the CPA, the US forced open Iraqi markets and made the nation beholden to the global capitalist system. Indeed, the transformation was so complete that the WTO granted Iraq observer status as early as 2004.<sup>42</sup>

Under the banner of fighting terrorism, the US invasion of Iraq provided a huge financial windfall for defense contractors like Lockheed Martin, Halliburton, and

Blackwater. The subsequent occupation established additional long-term investment opportunities for US banks and oil companies, by American decree. Meanwhile, the fear of another September 11 also provided a justification for expansive repression and surveillance within the United States.

## THE WAR, AT HOME

Addressing a joint session of Congress in the days following 9/11, President George W. Bush boldly announced that other nations had to choose a side, warning “either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”<sup>43</sup> This rhetorical dichotomy, between unquestioning obedience to the Bush plan and support for terrorism, proved a powerful and threatening tool, and it was readily applied not just to foreign governments, but to US subjects, as well.

One month after the attacks, at the behest of the Bush Administration, Congress passed the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act. Among its more than 1,000 provisions, the PATRIOT Act greatly expanded the Justice Department’s ability to administer wiretaps and searches, obtain personal records from third parties, freeze financial assets, define what constituted terrorist activity, and monitor immigration. According to Morton Halperin, a member of President Richard Nixon’s National Security Council, under the PATRIOT Act,

If the [US] government thinks you're under the control of a foreign government, they can wiretap you and never tell you, search your house and never tell you, break into your home, copy your hard drive, and never tell you that they've done it...Historically, the government has often believed that anyone who is protesting

government policy is doing it at the behest of a foreign government and opened counterintelligence investigations of them.<sup>44</sup>

Within a year, as many as 5,000 people in the US had been rounded up and detained in the investigation of September 11; none of them were charged in connection with the attacks.<sup>45</sup>

In March 2002, the Bush Administration instituted the “Homeland Security Advisory System,” a color-coded guide intended to keep Americans informed of the risk of additional terrorist attacks. The five levels, from highest risk of lowest, were: severe (red), high (orange), elevated/significant (yellow), guarded/general (blue), and low (green). In the nine years before the system was discontinued in 2011, the threat never dipped below an “elevated, significant risk of terrorist attack.”<sup>46</sup>

Taking advantage of this paranoia, in Summer 2002, the Bush Administration launched the Terrorism Information and Prevention System (Operation TIPS), a program designed to use citizen volunteers’ “unique position to serve as extra eyes and ears for law enforcement.” In its pilot stage alone, TIPS was to involve one million “truckers, letter carriers, train conductors, ship captains, utility employees, and other” American citizens as spies and informants.<sup>47</sup> However, as news reports about TIPS circulated, opposition to the program grew. Despite support from Senator Joe Lieberman, among others, Congress voted to eliminate it. But while TIPS was abandoned, other domestic surveillance programs continued unabated. For example, the “anti-terrorism” activities of law enforcement at a variety of levels included the surveillance, infiltration, and disruption of non-violent activist groups. Strikingly reminiscent of COINTELPRO, publicly known incidents of police infiltrating peace organizations under the guise of

fighting terrorism occurred in Fresno and Oakland, California; Baltimore, Maryland; Iowa City, Iowa; Olympia, Washington; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.<sup>48</sup>

Some of the coordination between police forces can be explained by the emergence of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Office of Homeland Security was established in the weeks after 9/11; a year later, the DHS merged customs, transportation security, the Secret Service, emergency management, the US Coast Guard, immigration, and border control into one cabinet department, with an annual budget of roughly \$30 billion. By 2010, DHS had given state and local police agencies \$31 billion in grants, some of which was used to apply new military technologies, like facial recognition programs, Predator drones, and infrared cameras, to domestic populations. The Department of Defense also contributed to the militarization of domestic police forces, distributing more than \$100 million worth of vehicles, aircraft, and weapons – in 2006 alone.<sup>49</sup>

The domestic context of the War on Terror –heightened fear and paranoia, expanded and consolidated police powers, and widespread accusations that hesitation, let alone opposition, provided aid to terrorists– was extremely hostile. And yet despite a campaign of disinformation and the overt threat of government repression, the Bush Administration’s imperial endeavors encountered considerable public opposition.

## THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

In the six months leading up to the invasion of Iraq, a massive, global peace movement emerged. Worldwide protests on October 26, 2002 involved as many as 250,000 people, including some 80,000 in San Francisco, California, and 100,000 in

Washington, D.C. Attendance in Washington, D.C. was roughly equivalent to that of the famous 1967 Pentagon protests. Two months later, on December 10, activists organized more than one hundred coordinated vigils, protests, and teach-ins in thirty-seven US states. In January, hundreds of thousands again took to the streets of San Francisco and Washington, D.C., the latter in below-freezing temperatures.<sup>50</sup>

On February 15, between eight and twelve million people in more than 300 cities around the world demonstrated in hopes of preventing the war. They included perhaps 250,000 in New York City; more than 750,000 in London; at least 300,000 throughout France; 500,000 in Berlin; 1.3 million in Barcelona and 600,000 in Madrid; one to three million in Rome; and 500,000 in Australia. Israel, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Japan, Canada, Syria, and South Africa were also among the sixty countries where protests drew large crowds. Demonstrations of various sizes also occurred in Chicago, Illinois; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Wausau, Wisconsin – roughly 150 US cities in all. Meanwhile, governments in more than ninety US city councils passed official resolutions against the war; they included Baltimore, Seattle, and Chicago.<sup>51</sup>

In March, with war preparations ramping up, peace activists also began engaging in non-violent disruptions, in addition to more traditional lobbying and protesting. Nearly 10,000 people in fifty cities signed the Iraq Pledge of Resistance, a promise to participate in civil disobedience in the event of a war on Iraq. On March 14, less than one week before the invasion, 200 protestors blocked access to the Pacific Stock Exchange in San Francisco; among the eighty demonstrators arrested was retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Warren Langley, the former head of the exchange. Three days later, 250 people marched on the US Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Capitol

police arrested fifty-four people, including Robert McIlvaine, who carried a sign reading “Not in my son’s name,” in honor of his son, Bobby, who was killed in the 9/11 attacks.<sup>52</sup>

On March 20, 2003, the day after the invasion began, mass scale civil disobedience shut down intersections, highways, and business districts in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Chicago, New York City, and elsewhere. In San Francisco, in a coordinated action similar to the Seattle WTO protests, roving demonstrators shut down dozens of intersections and repeatedly challenged Bay Bridge on-ramps. Thousands of people were arrested. In Chicago, protestors were arrested “by the busload” after blocking traffic around Federal Plaza and shutting down north and south-bound lanes of Lake Shore Drive. Over the next few days, additional protests erupted around the country. In Chicopee, Massachusetts, fifty-three people were arrested for blocking the road to Westover Air Reserve Base. In Johnston, Iowa, another sixteen people were arrested while occupying the state’s National Guard headquarters. Around the world, major protests also occurred in South Korea, Brazil, Ireland, Germany, Taiwan, and elsewhere. Protestors in Bahrain threw rocks at the British Embassy, while police in New Delhi, India were forced to defend the US Embassy. Several US embassies in Middle Eastern countries were closed entirely, while in France, protestors targeted several McDonald’s fast food restaurants, as symbols of US imperialism.<sup>53</sup>

In the US, protests were primarily coordinated by two activist networks: Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (the ANSWER coalition) and United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ). ANSWER organized the first major marches against the invasion of Iraq. The coalition was initially spearheaded by members of the Marxist-Leninist Workers World Party (WWP), though both the WWP and the American Right overestimated their



ideological influence on the larger movement. UFPJ, meanwhile, served as the umbrella for large, mainstream organizations, such as the National Council of Churches, Peace Action, the Quaker-affiliated American Friends Service Committee, and Veterans for Peace. Several of the WWP's positions (support for North Korea's Kim Jong-il, for example) provided easy fodder for red-baiters, who tried to use them to discredit the entire movement. However, the more moderate UFPJ was also attacked along the same ideological lines. In reality, ANSWER, UFPJ, and other anti-war coalitions were more significant as vessels than as organizations in themselves. Rather than recruiting new members, they primarily provided a mechanism for other groups to pool their resources and focus their efforts on mass events. By January 2003, three months after its founding, UFPJ represented 150 different organizations.<sup>54</sup>

Contrary to accusations that the movement was merely a communist front, groups from across the political spectrum participated in anti-war protests in the months before the invasion. They included progressive stalwarts like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Organization for Women (NOW), the American Indian Movement, and the Sierra Club. They also included hundreds of other groups, many with revealing names, including: Gulf War Veterans, Veterans for Common Sense, Veterans Against the Iraq War, September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Mormons for Equality and Social Justice, A Jewish Voice for Peace, the Catholic Worker, Pax Christi, the Catholic Diocese of Community and Justice, the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom, Mothers Against War, Code Pink, Grandparents for Peace, Latinos Together Against the War, Black Voices for Peace, Not in Our Name, the Green Party, People for a

Just Peace in the Holy Land, the Gandhi Alliance for Peace, Students Against the War, the Campus Anti-War Network, the Direct Action to Stop the War Project, Positive Force, Moratorium to Stop the War, Standing United for Peace, Win Without War, the International Socialist Organization, Voices in the Wilderness, and the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition. Other groups involved included MoveOn.Org, which doubled its membership in the months before the invasion, and Labor Against the War, which included sixty unions by January 2003.<sup>55</sup>

Despite massive demonstrations, among the largest in world history, the war's government champions publicly rejected and demonized the peace movement. When asked about the February 15 protests, which involved perhaps ten million people, President Bush remarked, "You know, the size of protests is like deciding, 'well, I'm going to decide policy based upon a focus group.'"<sup>56</sup> Parroting Bush, Australian Prime Minister John Howard mused, "I don't know that you can measure public opinion just by the number of people who turn up at demonstrations."<sup>57</sup> In other words, the silent majority of non-protestors should be counted as war supporters. Perhaps most cynically of all, British Prime Minister Tony Blair told protestors that if there were no war, they would have "blood on their hands" and be responsible for the future crimes of the Hussein regime. Moreover, Blair remarked, no matter how many people marched in London, the number paled in comparison to those killed in the wars Hussein started. Blair did not mention the role of the British government in Hussein's reign or in the past wars he referenced. He also failed to discuss scenarios in which blood would be on his own hands.<sup>58</sup>

Non-government forces on the Right echoed the statements of Bush, Blair, and

Howard. In February 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had publicly rejected any links between Vietnam and the prospective war in Iraq, calling them “a real stretch. Any comparison to that period and that long, long, long conflict with enormous numbers of young people killed is not relevant.”<sup>59</sup> But while Rumsfeld sought to distance Iraq from the negative legacy of Vietnam, other US war supporters deliberately equated modern protestors with those of the 1960s era. Members of the group September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows were told to “go back to the Sixties.” Tens of thousands of anti-war marchers in Washington, D.C., were greeted by counter-protestors, sitting on their balcony, drinking champagne, and displaying a sign, reading “Hippies Go Home.”<sup>60</sup> In New York City, a war supporter attempted to belittle a marching protestor by shouting, “Flower child, huh?...It didn't work in the '60s. Why do you think it's going to work now?”<sup>61</sup> That American reactionaries would use the movements of the 1960s, which they opposed, as default insults for modern movements is perhaps unsurprising. In fact, this framework served an important function, simultaneously re-writing the history of the 1960s while also, presumably, labeling 21<sup>st</sup> century protestors as naïve. Other rightwing backlash was even more hostile.

When country music stars the Dixie Chicks expressed their opposition to the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, conservative pundit Pat Buchanan called them “the Dixie Twits...the dumbest bimbos...I have seen.”<sup>62</sup> Clear Channel Communications, the mega-media conglomerate that formed after Clinton era de-regulation, used its stations to organize a boycott of the group, as well as protests at several of their concerts. Protesters at the poorly attended, but well documented, demonstrations referred to the group as “Saddam’s Angels,” among other sexist and jingoistic epithets. The group also received

death threats. Less prominent dissidents also faced accusations of cowardice and treason. In 2006, long after Bush had secured a second term, rightwing pundit Ann Coulter denounced four women whose husbands died on 9/11 for demanding an investigation into the US intelligence failures surrounding the attacks. Regarding the widows, Coulter claimed she had “never seen people enjoying their husbands’ deaths so much.”<sup>63</sup> In the lead-up to the war, such vitriol was the rule, not the exception.<sup>64</sup>

When Yale history professor Glenda Gilmore published an op-ed against the war in the campus newspaper, she was targeted online by conservative blogger Andrew Sullivan, whose readers bombarded Gilmore with rape and death threats. Nicholas de Genova, a professor at Columbia University, was forced to use a security escort on campus after receiving death threats for participating in a teach-in about the war. At Wheaton College in Massachusetts, students who hung an upside-down “distress” flag at their home had rocks thrown through their windows, received death threats, and had a dead fish nailed to their front door. At Yale, several men wielding a 2 by 4 attempted to break into a female student’s room late at night after she, too, hung an upside-down flag in her window.<sup>65</sup>

On the eve of the invasion, Rupert Murdoch’s *New York Post* encouraged the boycott of movies starring “appeasement-loving celebs,” such as Susan Sarandon, Martin Sheen, and Danny Glover. These “Saddam lovers,” the paper argued, should be punished with box office flops. On Fox News, also owned by Murdoch, Bill O’Reilly announced that any protests that continued after the invasion would be “un-American.” A February editorial in the *New York Daily News*, meanwhile, referred to supporters of UN weapons inspections as “the surrender crowd” and likened the peace marches of October to “an Al

Qaeda meeting.”<sup>66</sup> An editorial in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania *Lancaster New Era* the following month referred to protestors as the “terrorist tolerance movement” and the “hate-America crowd.”<sup>67</sup> Others simply referred to activists as “reds” and “Trotskyists.”<sup>68</sup> Signs carried by counter-protestors at demonstrations around the country included “Protester Equals Terrorist,” “Anti-War = Pro-Saddam,” and “Bomb Iraq.”<sup>69</sup> But although they received disproportionately high news coverage (given their tiny numbers), pro-war demonstrations were not as “grassroots” as they appeared. Some of them, including demonstrations in Fort Wayne, Indiana; Charleston, South Carolina; and Sacramento, California were actually organized by Clear Channel, via the largest network of radio stations in the country.<sup>70</sup>

During the 1960s, the American peace movement only reached a critical mass after several years of warfare. In the 2000s, a mass movement emerged less than a year into the occupation of Afghanistan and several months before the invasion of Iraq. However, months of consistent, disruptive protests could not pressure the Bush Administration or its allies to abandon the path to war. President Bush’s statements that protest had no impact on him may have been as much an attempt to disempower the movement as a statement of fact (treatment of demonstrators during his 2004 re-election campaign seemed to reveal a drastic change of heart). In the short-term, however, protest was not sufficient to prevent the war. Disinformation about Iraq and the demonization of the opposition, perpetuated both by the Bush Administration and the corporate media, successfully challenged the credibility of the anti-war movement. As a result, even with large numbers and mainstream participation, the movement’s short-term impact on public opinion was marginal.<sup>71</sup>

As the war raged on, mass protests continued, though much less frequently. Civil disobedience continued as well, including numerous sit-ins at government offices and blockades of ports shipping military vehicles, notably in Olympia and Tacoma, Washington. The movement also began challenging the pillars, beyond public opinion, that propped up the war machine. For example, in order to combat misinformation about military service and to limit the administration's capacity for warfare, activists disseminated counter-recruitment information, held sit-ins at recruitment offices, and disrupted recruiters at public events. In order to challenge the deceptions of Fox News and Clear Channel, activist journalists developed alternative media networks and bolstered support for programs such as *Democracy Now!* To challenge official narratives about the morality of American intervention, activists also publicized the US' pro-torture policies as well as Iraqi opinion polls that refuted Bush Administration claims about the democratic aims of the war. As the occupation continued, many new activist organizations sprouted up. Among them were Gold Star Families for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), and Code Pink. In addition to the creativity of their actions, these organizations were especially significant for their ability to reclaim from conservative pundits a level of credibility when discussing the war.

#### GOLD STAR FAMILIES FOR PEACE

Gold Star Families for Peace (GSFP) was founded in early 2005, as an offshoot of the larger group Military Families Speak Out. The organization consisted of family members of soldiers killed in Iraq, and its name referenced the gold star displayed in the homes of fallen soldiers. In August 2005, a dozen GSFP members –most famously Cindy

Sheehan— set up an encampment outside of President Bush’s Crawford, Texas ranch. “Camp Casey,” named for Sheehan’s son who had been killed in Iraq a year earlier, quickly became a hub for anti-war activists. Over the course of the month, several thousand supporters visited the camp, including actors Martin Sheen and Viggo Mortensen, singer Joan Baez, American Indian activist Russell Means, and Reverend Al Sharpton. In addition to support from Texas-based churches and peace organizations, Camp Casey received organizational support from Veterans for Peace, IVAW, and Code Pink, among others. Sheehan became an overnight media sensation, in part because journalists were already in the area to cover Bush’s five-week vacation. On August 17, more than 1,500 candlelight vigils were held around the world in solidarity with Camp Casey.<sup>72</sup>

But while Camp Casey served as a catalyst for the anti-war movement, it also attracted Bush supporters. Within the encampment’s first few days, the conservative organization Move America Forward sent a bus of self-proclaimed “flag waving citizens” to Crawford to demonstrate against the encampment. Over the next few weeks, tensions steadily escalated. In mid-August, a pro-war demonstrator pulled up in a pickup truck, blaring country music, waving an American flag, and displaying a sign reading “Texas is Bush Country.” A few days later, an angry neighbor fired a shotgun in the air, causing panic among protestors and members of the Secret Service. Next, a man drove a pickup truck toward the encampment, dragging chains and a pipe in order to destroy a display of wooden crosses representing fallen soldiers. Counter demonstrators accused Sheehan of “working for the devil” and carried signs reading, “Cindy Supports Osama,” “Bin Laden Says Keep Up the Good Work, Cindy,” and “You Are Aiding Terrorism.” An open letter

in the local newspaper was addressed “to the woman complaining about her son’s death.”<sup>73</sup>

As the month went on, and Camp Casey grew, public pressure on Bush mounted. Though he maintained his refusal to meet Sheehan’s demand for a private meeting, on August 24, he went on the offensive, meeting privately with the families of nineteen other fallen soldiers – all of them hand-selected war supporters. At the end of the month, the camp closed. Three separate buses, carrying members of GSFP, Gold Star Families for Peace, Military Families Speak Out, IVAW, and Veterans for Peace, then set out on informational tours through the North, South, and Midwest, before re-connecting in Washington, D.C. Sheehan’s tour covered fifty-one cities in twenty-eight states.<sup>74</sup>

#### IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

Like GSFP, IVAW, too, was an outgrowth of a larger coalition. IVAW was launched in 2004 at a Veterans for Peace conference. For its first few years, the group primarily provided support for other movement events, as it had at Camp Casey. IVAW members served as speakers for anti-war protests, gave talks at universities, and made appearances on Fox News’ *O’Reilly Factor* and National Public Radio’s *Tavis Smiley Show*. In 2007, the group ramped up its efforts.<sup>75</sup>

In May and June 2007, IVAW members launched “Operation First Casualty” on the streets of New York City, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. A reference to the first casualty of war being truth, the IVAW actions consisted of re-enactments of war scenarios – taking sniper fire, confronting protests, arresting suspected insurgents– in full uniform and at full volume, though without weapons. Despite being disruptive and



visually stunning political theater, however, Operation First Casualty was largely ignored by corporate media until the US Marine Corps began pursuing (ultimately unsuccessful) charges against participants for wearing their uniforms. In August, members of IVAW protested military recruiters' use of video games at the St. Louis Black Expo, under the banner "War is Not a Game." In September, IVAW members participated in a 5,000 person "die-in" in Washington, D.C., as part of a larger 100,000 person protest. That same month, IVAW launched "Befriend a Recruiter," a campaign in which veterans and youth with no intention of enlisting booked appointments in order to clog recruiters' calendars.<sup>76</sup>

In March 2008, IVAW marked the fifth anniversary of the Iraq invasion with a four-day event called "Winter Soldier." Based on similar hearings held by Vietnam veterans in 1971, Winter Soldier provided a venue for more than 200 veterans to share their experiences in the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Some veterans described the constantly shifting Rules of Engagement. Others testified about aspects of military culture, such as the Marine Corps greeting "kill babies" and the ubiquitous use of racist terms for Iraqis, like "towel-head," "camel jockey," "haji," and "sand nigger." Specialist Jeffrey Smith of Orlando, Florida described seeing a pickup truck full of decapitated bodies, torn apart by US weapons: "These 'insurgents' didn't appear to me to look like the hardened terrorists that everyone says they are. These were mostly teenage boys and young men who looked like they were from the local community."<sup>77</sup> Private First Class Vincent Emanuele of Chesterton, Indiana described shooting an insurgent in the head at close range. Two weeks after the shooting, Emanuele's convoy encountered the body where he had left it; a fellow marine took a picture of the mutilated head to use as a

screen saver for his laptop. Though largely ignored by the corporate media, Winter Soldier did yield an invitation from the Congressional Progressive Caucus to testify in Washington, D.C. IVAW's membership nationwide also increased by twenty-five percent in the two months after the hearings.<sup>78</sup>

In August 2008, IVAW performed Operation First Casualty on the streets of Denver, Colorado – site of the Democratic National Convention. The group also delivered their demands – for immediate withdrawal of US troops, reparations payments to the Iraqi people, and full healthcare for all veterans– to Barrack Obama's campaign headquarters.<sup>79</sup>

But despite the nation-wide mantra of “support the troops,” backlash against anti-war veterans was substantial. At a 2005 protest at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, IVAW members were called “traitors,” while a passer-by in Chicago called Operation First Casualty “pathetic.” In October 2007, Young Republicans in Seattle called protests featuring IVAW members “sedition” and “a disgrace” while holding signs reading “Give War a Chance,” “Stop Global Whining,” and “Stop Smoking Marijuana.” The next month, spectators at a Veteran's Day parade in Denver turned their back on an IVAW contingent. In 2006, Army Lieutenant Ehren Watada (not affiliated with IVAW) refused to deploy to Iraq, stating,

My moral and legal obligation is to the Constitution and not those who would issue unlawful orders...it is my job to serve and protect those soldiers, the American people, and innocent Iraqis with no voice...It is my conclusion as an officer of the Armed Forces that the war in Iraq is not only morally wrong but a horrible breach of American law.<sup>80</sup>

Rebecca Davis, co-founder of the pro-war group Military Families Voice of Victory, called Watada “a coward and a traitor,” a sentiment echoed in editorials and blogs nationwide.<sup>81</sup>

## CODE PINK

A third group from this period, Code Pink: Women for Peace, started in November 2002, just before the invasion of Iraq, when its members launched a four-month long, 24-hour-per-day peace vigil in front of the White House. The vigil culminated with fifty protests around the US on March 8, 2003, National Women’s Day. Among the twenty-five women arrested at the Washington, D.C. protests were Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*, and Amy Goodman, host of *Democracy Now!* Like GSF and IVAW, Code Pink was organized around a common identity as well as a political goal. The group’s name was simultaneously a jab at the Bush Administration’s color-coded terror alert system, an embrace of the femininity of the color pink, and a parental call to arms – “Code Pink” also being the hospital term for an infant abduction emergency. Bright pink clothing, hats, and accessories soon became a calling card for the group, which grew to include nearly 200 autonomous chapters.<sup>82</sup>

Code Pink engaged in a wide variety of anti-war activities. For example, the group participated in Congressional lobby days, prepared papers on the conditions of Iraqi women, organized eight separate protests of 100,000 or more people, helped bring a delegation of Iraqi women to the US, coordinated humanitarian visits to Iraq and Afghanistan, and donated over \$500,000 in medical supplies and humanitarian aid to refugees of Fallujah, Iraq. During December of 2004 and 2005, Code Pink also

campaigned against G.I. Joes and other military-inspired toys as Christmas gifts, echoing IVAW with the slogan, “War is not a game.” However, Code Pink is most well known for its disorderly conduct, such as banner drops and attempted citizen’s arrests.<sup>83</sup>

With calls to end the war, Code Pink interrupted several speaking engagements and official addresses by Bush Administration officials, including Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, John Bolton, Dick Cheney, and Karl Rove. At the 2004 Republican National Convention, undercover Code Pink activists disrupted speeches by President Bush and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. A few months later, Code Pink struck again during Bush’s second inauguration speech in January 2005. The group also interrupted a number of government functions, including testimony by General David Petraeus, Senate hearings on Guantanamo Bay, and a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) meeting at which the agency further de-regulated American media ownership.<sup>84</sup>

Code Pink’s actions, inspired by groups like ACT UP and Earth First!, were predictably unpopular with the American Right. However, the backlash against the group was not limited to Fox News, against whom Code Pink organized pickets. Liberals, such as *Daily Kos*’ Markos Moulitsas, also attacked the group because they targeted all of the war’s supporters – not just Republicans. As early as March 2003, Code Pink had issued “pink slips” to Senators Hillary Clinton and Diane Feinstein for their support of the invasion, while giving “badges of honor” to those who voted against it. The group continued to hound pro-war Democrats, especially after the 2006 elections, which were widely viewed as a mandate for peace. Code Pink activists disrupted numerous speeches

by Clinton, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and others, and they also camped out in front of Pelosi's San Francisco home.<sup>85</sup>

In Fall 2007, Code Pink also became entangled in an on-going struggle between the federal government and the city of Berkeley, California. For years, Berkeley High School had maintained a policy against allowing military recruiters on campus, but Bush's 2001 No Child Left Behind Act removed local control by attaching federal education funding to recruiter access. Under threat of a lawsuit from the Pentagon, the school district finally complied in 2007. The same year, Berkeley passed a resolution in support of prosecuting Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld for war crimes. In October, Code Pink and Grandmothers Against the War, among others, began picketing a Marine Corps recruitment center, which had recently relocated to downtown Berkeley. Counter-demonstrators, led by a local radio personality, soon joined them.<sup>86</sup>

As tensions between the two sides escalated, the Berkeley City Council intervened, passing a series of resolutions in January 2008. Among them, the council assigned parking spots directly in front of the recruitment center to Code Pink, requested that the city attorney investigate legal means to oust the recruitment center, and classified the recruiters as "uninvited and unwelcome intruders." In response, incensed state and federal lawmakers, notably South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint, proposed a series of laws that would cut funding for Berkeley's schools, transportation, and children's lunch programs. Many of the bills' supporters were Southern conservatives, who apparently found no irony in advocating for federal intervention. The Berkeley city council responded with a new resolution, clarifying that they opposed the war, not American troops. Mayor Tom Bates, himself an Army veteran, apologized for any offense to

soldiers and affirmed that the recruiters had the right to stay in Berkeley, though “we wish they would leave.”<sup>87</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Weighing the success of the anti-war movement is difficult. On the one hand, the movement ultimately achieved its objective of troop withdrawal, as the last US troops were removed from Iraq at the end of 2011. Though the occupation was not as significant of an issue in the 2008 Presidential elections as the sinking US economy, Senator Hillary Clinton’s campaign for the Democratic nomination suffered for her early support for the war, and Republican nominee John McCain publicly endorsed maintaining a US military presence in Iraq for 100 years. On the other hand, many other aspects of the War on Terror, both domestically and abroad, continue unabated. For example, while expanding the US troop presence in Afghanistan and intervening in countries such as Libya, the Obama Administration also renewed key portions of the PATRIOT Act and authorized the National Defense Authorization Act as well as the domestic use of Predator drones. Moreover, the conclusion of the Iraq occupation can only be celebrated half-heartedly, given the enormous loss of life over its eight years, the continued presence of contractors, and the uncertain future that Iraq faces.<sup>88</sup>

Building on the organizing networks established by the global justice movement a few years earlier, organizations like UFPJ, ANSWER, GSFP, IVAW, and Code Pink used mass protest to pursue two major, overlapping goals: to build public support for peace and to apply political pressure on the war makers. At the first task, the peace movement was strikingly successful. For while pro-war voices remained both potent and

well-amplified, public opinion on the war shifted greatly between early 2003 and the Fall 2008 elections. According to opinion polls by the Pew Research Center, CNN, Gallup, CBS, and the *New York Times*, support for US military action in Iraq was just over seventy percent at the time of the invasion. Public support then steadily dwindled, dipping below fifty percent by the end of 2004 and below forty percent by the end of 2006. Between 2006 and 2008, public support hovered between thirty and forty percent.<sup>89</sup>

This accomplishment is especially impressive given that in addition to overt support for the war from the likes of Clear Channel and Fox News, the Bush Administration also enjoyed considerable influence among other corporate media. CBS' Katie Couric, for example, reported feeling "pressure from government officials and corporate executives to cast the war in a positive light," while the *Washington Post* ran 140 front-page stories focusing on administration officials' claims about Iraq in the six months before the invasion. The Bush Administration also maintained an enormous budget for influencing public opinion. During Bush's first term, the administration spent \$250 million on public relations contracts, nearly doubling the \$128 million spent during Clinton's second term. Among the administration's most well known propaganda scandals were the greatly inflated and dramatized reports of Private Jessica Lynch's capture and rescue in March 2003 and the death of former NFL football player Corporal Pat Tillman in 2004. The military covered up Tillman's death by "friendly fire," instead trumpeting his death as an act of heroism; he was awarded the Silver Star, and his funeral was broadcast nationally.<sup>90</sup>

But while activists' efforts eventually rivaled and undercut Bush era propaganda, the relationship between public opinion and actual political influence was much less clear. Paralleling support for the war, the 2002 mid-term elections veered Republican, while the 2006 mid-term elections gave Democrats the majority of both Congressional houses. The 2004 Presidential election did not feature an anti-war candidate, though one of the most prominent attacks of the campaign was a Republican-financed assault on the military service record of Democratic candidate John Kerry, who had received three purple hearts, the Silver Star, and the Bronze Star during the Vietnam War – and was later active in Vietnam Veterans Against the War. In short, the anti-war movement played an increasingly significant, but still limited, role in national elections through 2008. Outside of US party politics, the movement's impact is also difficult to ascertain.<sup>91</sup>

In terms of global support, Bush's "Coalition of the Willing" steadily shrunk as the occupation wore on. In 2004, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, New Zealand, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Spain, and Thailand withdrew their troops from Iraq. In 2005, the Netherlands and Portugal withdrew, followed by Italy, Japan, and Norway in 2006. In 2007, Denmark and Slovakia withdrew. In 2008, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Singapore, Tonga, and the Ukraine withdrew from Iraq. In 2009, Australia, El Salvador, Estonia, and Romania withdrew, as well. In 2011, the UK and US withdrew their all of their remaining troops. While many factors, including US foreign aid and political developments in Iraq, contributed to participation in and defection from the coalition, political pressure from peace movements around the world also played a role.<sup>92</sup>



In the area of military recruitment, declining support for the war caused recruiters to miss their quotas frequently (for example, in April 2005, the Army missed its goal by forty-two percent). The increased funding for, and aggressiveness of, recruitment campaigns during the period also seems to reflect some difficulty in these efforts. In 2005, the Army spent \$100 million to revitalize its image and sponsor outreach at music concerts and sporting events. Between 2003 and 2006, the military also provided more than 100,000 “moral waivers” to previously ineligible recruits – including 900 waivers for felony convictions in 2006. Furthermore, in 2003, there were 279 substantiated cases of misconduct by US Army recruiters, and another 320 in 2004. However, the direct influence of the movement’s counter-recruitment efforts is unclear, especially as shrinking economic opportunities and sky-rocketing college tuition costs favored recruiters.<sup>93</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, the movement also achieved only minimal success at applying economic pressure on the war’s proponents. Public shaming forced Blackwater to change its name and CACI International to withdraw from the private interrogation business. On a wide scale, however, the massive, growing corporations of the US military-industrial complex were not pressed to abandon their war efforts or to use their influence to push for an end to the occupation. In many ways, the private war industry parallels the decentralized vulnerability of global corporations discussed in Chapter 4. However, unlike a local grocery store or even Taco Bell, they are not easily boycotted. Rather, companies like Lockheed Martin and Halliburton have proven virtually immune to public pressure. For while they are intimately involved in the US government, both through political contributions and a revolving door of public/private executives, the US

government is also their primary consumer. In fact, even the government of Iraq could not successfully ban Blackwater from operating within its borders. Exerting democratic influence on American foreign policy is an incredibly difficult objective. Forcing a US withdrawal from Iraq, even after eight years, is thus both a tiny victory, when compared to the war machine as a whole, and a substantial victory, given how unconcerned with the public that machine is.

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CONCLUSION:  
THE SHIFTING POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE NEOLIBERAL ERA

1960s Movement of Movements →

← Neoliberalism

1980s Direct Action Movements →

← Neoliberal Globalization

1990s Global Justice Movement →

← The War on Terror

2000s Anti-war Movement →

I take rightwing money and government repression as givens, sort of like the conditions or environment in which we exist. What interests me more is our own choices.

- Mark Rudd<sup>1</sup>

There are no magic answers, no miraculous methods to overcome the problems we face, just the familiar ones: honest search for understanding, education, organization, action that raises the cost of state violence for its perpetrators or that lays the basis for institutional change –and the kind of commitment that will persist despite the temptations of disillusionment, despite many failures and only limited successes, inspired by the hope of a brighter future.

- Noam Chomsky<sup>2</sup>

Since the 1960s, American structures of power have undergone a series of paradigmatic shifts. During the 1980s, the Right, under the leadership of Ronald Reagan, overhauled the federal government, undermining the legislative reforms of the 1960s and shifting the benefits of state resources to the wealthy. The following decade, during the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, the same basic interests furthered the neoliberal process domestically and expanded it at the global level, through the deregulation of international investments. In the 2000s, George W. Bush continued the process of domestic and global neoliberalism, openly expanding the latter through military force.

The American social movements of the post-1960s period responded to these changes, often at a delayed pace. They were largely defensive movements, and they reacted not just to changing cultural conditions, but also to specific actions by American elites. Earth First! and other similar groups of their era attempted to counteract a series of neoliberal policy decisions, including the privatization of national forests, cuts to social programs, and assaults on the rights of women and other marginalized groups. The punk activists at 924 Gilman and ABC No Rio confronted similar problems. Some of them were specific to the punk culture, but most were framed by broader trends on the American political landscape – gentrification, the mainstreaming of bigotry, and the elimination of public spaces. In the 1990s, the global justice movement, in its many forms, confronted the rapid expansion of neoliberal policies on a worldwide scale, ranging from new international agreements that gave corporations immunity from the rule of law to the establishment of sweatshops in the United States, Mexico, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. The peace movement of the following decade, though growing

prior to the invasion of Iraq, emerged almost entirely to oppose the imperial decisions of the Bush Administration and their corporate-military allies (and faded as Bush left office).

And while there is nothing intrinsically problematic with movements being reactions to negative changes, in these cases, such a dynamic has often limited activists by allowing them to demand only a return to the status quo – itself often an intolerable situation. An end to the hyper-aggressive anti-environmentalism of the Reagan era became the similar, though less openly hostile, policies of the Bush I and Clinton Administrations (which still did little to slow the global march toward climate change catastrophe). Likewise, abandoning the endless war foreign policy of the Bush II Administration has largely meant a return, under Barack Obama, to the more covert Reagan and Clinton era policies of widespread assassinations and proxy wars. However, the contributions of post-1960s activists must be assessed with an understanding of the hostile overall political climate in which they operated.

The complex dynamics of the New Deal, World War II, and the Cold War created vulnerabilities in the American power structure, but by the late 1970s, they had been largely shored up. By establishing a last line of defense against the neoliberal agenda, however, 1980s era groups not only provided examples of open resistance, they also safeguarded options for subsequent activists –Earth First! by protecting wilderness for the next generation, and 924 Gilman Street, more indirectly, by providing members a space in which to develop analytical tools that they could later apply to other circumstances. Groups like Earth First! excelled at the tactics of direct action (i.e., sit-ins, lockdowns), and the methods that they perfected were widely adopted by global justice activists.

However, without a higher body to intervene, as the federal government had during the Civil Rights Movement, the strategic impact of Earth First!'s direct action was minimal. In other words, beyond creating a hassle for clear-cutters and developers, activists were generally unable to apply political pressure on their opponents.

For all their heroics, the activists of Earth First! and 924 Gilman were not able to grow a mass movement capable of pressing for their demands on more than a local scale. The dynamics of social movements are such that not every activist has to operate in an identical manner. It may be unfair to expect these particular organizations be ambassadors for their broader movements, given that more moderate groups, like the Sierra Club, were certainly able to benefit from many of Earth First!'s more militant activities. It is, nonetheless, difficult to imagine very many people who do not self-identify as radicals, activists, or punks participating in, or even alongside, either organization. And without clear and massive public support, movements for the environment, democracy, and basic human rights will remain on the defensive. These are not the movements of the powerful; their primary strength is in their potential to organize superior numbers.

In the areas of broad appeal and strategy, global justice activists in Chiapas, Seattle, Immokalee, and elsewhere made some key advancements. The 1999 Seattle protests, for example, have become most famous for the direct action disruptions that kept the World Trade Organization from meeting. However, the events organized to counter the free trade summit also included a variety of teach-ins, panel discussions, parties, rallies, and conferences. Organizers tried to find ways to maximize the involvement of sympathetic allies – not just those willing to risk arrest in the city's

streets. Similarly, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers developed a strategy for pressuring Taco Bell that required a wide base of allies, each of which contributed in unique ways.<sup>3</sup>

The global justice activists of the 1990s searched for vulnerabilities within the emerging global power structure, while also building cross-national alliances and solidarity networks. The following decade, peace activists used these very networks to coordinate opposition to a US war on Iraq months before the invasion. Though they struggled to apply political pressure, they confronted the war machine at many points, developed alternative media networks, and, eventually, influenced public opinion enough to temporarily soil the Republican brand. By the 2012 Presidential elections, even Republican nominee Mitt Romney admitted, “We don’t want another Iraq.”<sup>4</sup>

Broadly speaking, movements for political and social change must achieve two related tasks: 1) applying pressure on those with power, and 2) growing public support for their cause. Social movement activists have been fairly successful at exerting local influence over the last few decades, but their impact on national politics has been limited. Most importantly, activists have been unable to counter the “pro-business,” neoliberal trends that are now pervasive in both major political parties. The political Left, which represents social justice, environmentalism, and other causes of the marginalized, is not the base of the Democratic Party, and, particularly since the ascendancy of Bill Clinton, it has held little sway. With notable exceptions such as Dick Gephardt, Democrats generally supported NAFTA and the WTO. In the limited choice between the two major political parties, there was no fair trade option. Both parties also supported the invasion of Iraq, and, in 2004, as in 1968, the Democratic Party failed to nominate an anti-war

presidential candidate, despite a massive, public peace movement. But while these examples say much about the deficiencies of the Democratic Party and the two-party political system more broadly, they also, more importantly, reflect the failure of American social movements to rival corporate political influence.

It is difficult to measure the exact size of social movements, but both the global justice movement of the 1990s and the peace movement of the early 2000s were comparable to, if not larger than, the more famous movements of the 1960s period. Those earlier movements may have been more effective, but their success was not due to greater strength in numbers. Rather, even with large numbers, recent movements have struggled to gain, and sustain, access to national media, both because concentrated corporate media conglomerates are more deliberate in what they black out and because the sheer volume of the 24-hour news cycle limits the impact of brief events like rallies and marches. For example, the large and widespread acts of protest and civil disobedience on the eve of the invasion of Iraq prompted little more than condescending musings from the Bush Administration, and they faded in popular memory and media coverage once the occupation began. In contrast, the sustained action of Camp Casey became difficult for the corporate media and the White House to ignore. Recognizing a disadvantage in messaging, activists have also taken direct action, by developing alternative and DIY media institutions (i.e., *Democracy Now!*, *Indymedia*, Facebook, Twitter) and improving media tactics, such as the savvy self-promotion of groups like SmartMeme and the Yes Men (who make documentaries to promote their own actions).

Internet-based networking, especially through social media, has allowed activists to coordinate huge days of action. On October 24, 2009, the climate change group

350.org sponsored a day of more than 4,000 environmental demonstrations in 170 countries. Though the tactic of simultaneous actions was not new –millions of people participated in Earth Day in 1970 and Earth First! organized similar actions in its Mt. Graham campaign– the reach of the internet has elevated this method to a new level. Similarly, though national media initially ignored mass protests in Wisconsin in February 2011, the thousands of photographs of the occupied capitol posted to the internet each day were disseminated widely. These networking opportunities have increased the potential for movements to have a wide impact across regional and national borders, and perhaps even provoke coverage from corporate media. Less clear, however, is whether movements can take advantage of these opportunities and translate their numbers into sustained political pressure. Public support can be fleeting, and movements need to involve sympathizers in concrete ways that do not require them to become full-time activists.

On the other end of the spectrum, American elites have maintained a constant offensive since the 1960s. Because the powerful, by definition, have power, they play by a different set of rules. They are the side of oppression (only those with power can oppress), so they can also use underhanded tactics and bait various bigotries and prejudices in order to bolster support for their aims. With these caveats, however, the recent history of the American Right may provide some important lessons for people's movements. In the aftermath of the 1960s, activists on the Right made major, deliberate pushes to pressure and incapacitate the movements of the weak. They undercut reform legislation, including environmental protections, labor laws, aid for the poor, and anti-discrimination policy. They limited the electoral power of social movements, by



increasing corporate funding to both major parties, re-mapping voting districts, passing discriminatory voter ID laws, and disenfranchising prisoners and felons. They also deliberately co-opted the language of social movements in order to use their strengths against them, for example by re-defining “freedom” according to neoliberal standards and by framing socialism and feminism as irrational, evil belief systems unworthy of further exploration.

At the same time that American elites were diminishing the power of social justice movements, however, they also expanded their own. They established precisely focused, yet far-reaching organizations like the Heritage Foundation, ALEC, and the Business Roundtable in order to develop long-term strategies and push for their interests, both covertly and overtly. They shifted financial rules and tax laws in order to make themselves much richer, and thus more powerful, at the expense of the rest of society. And they made themselves generally less vulnerable, both by removing laws and regulations that made them accountable to their victims and by decentralizing their operations through subcontracts, franchises, and complex bureaucracy. As early as the mid-1970s, the influence of the corporate and religious Right was sufficient to push the Democratic Party to adopt ever more conservative positions. By 1992, the Democratic Party had widely adopted the basic premises that informed neoliberal policies, freeing the Republican Party to present a vision that continually pushed the envelope of Rightwing extremism. In other words, Democratic victories provided corporate interests access to the White House, while Republican victories allowed corporate interests to run the White House themselves. With tangible goals and a long-term vision for achieving them in

mind, conservative strategists created a political context that benefited them even in the worst-case scenario.

Despite the important contributions of American social movements, and the great risks and sacrifices taken by activists, their victories have been few and far between. One problem is that these movements – of the 1960s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s – generally have not understood themselves as waves of the same larger push. As a result, they have not focused on creating long-term opportunities for the activists of the next wave. Those on the Right, on the other hand, have taken this lesson to heart. Just as Grover Norquist advises, activists must ask themselves “If we win this battle, how will it feed on itself and lead to future victories...?”<sup>5</sup> This is the question that guided decades of steady Civil Rights agitation in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The NAACP and others won tangible gains against the Jim Crow power structure that not only improved people’s lives in the present, but also set the stage for future activists. The cracks that they made in the Jim Crow system were then expanded by the sit-ins and freedom rides of the early 1960s. Successful movements must create and expand weaknesses in the structures of power that they oppose. To do so, moderate and radical activists must plan their actions in ways that complement one another’s work.

By essentially all standards, social movements, the movements of the “weak,” have established their ethical superiority over those in power. They are the side that opposes, rather than facilitates, the destruction of the planet. They are the side that opposes, rather than reinforces, racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppressive discrimination. They are the side that opposes, rather than champions, slavery, exploitation, genocide, and war.

Too often, however, a belief in the righteousness of the cause has served as a substitute for actual organizing. In short, far too few activists have felt the need to do the frustrating and difficult work of appealing to those not already in the movement. This failure is especially egregious, given that repression, whether the harassment and imprisonment of activists or the public conflation of dissent and terrorism, is a key tool of those in power – and it is far less viable without the tacit consent of the people. Movements are much more than just self-identified “activists,” and hostile political contexts, such as the 1980s under Reagan and the 2000s under Bush leave activists isolated and weak.

Noam Chomsky offers that “there are no magic answers...to overcome the problems we face.” We have to be smarter, and we have to grow our numbers. We have to build movements that are large enough to win. We have to embrace both the strengths and the vulnerabilities of the other side. We have to find ways to pressure the powerful, not hope for their best behavior. We have to foster not only a culture of resistance but also a culture of democracy, human rights, tolerance, cooperation, critical thinking, and possibility. We have to accept that we are in this for the long haul.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Rudd, e-mail to author, August 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Michael Albert, *Remembering Tomorrow: From SDS to Life After Capitalism* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007), 194.

<sup>3</sup> People for Fair Trade / Network Opposed to WTO, "WTO Calendar of Events," November 4, 1999, Acc. #5177-3, Box 2, Folder 88, WTO Seattle Collection, University of Washington (Seattle, WA). The protest archives, for example, include a flyer for a "Children's Dolphin and Sea Turtle Drawing Exhibition," which highlights the WTO's decisions on ocean regulations in family-friendly way. WTO Host Committee of People for Fair Trade & Network Opposed to the WTO, "Children's Dolphin and Sea Turtle Drawing Exhibition," 1999, Acc. #5177-3, Box 2, Folder 18, WTO Seattle Collection, University of Washington (Seattle, WA).

<sup>4</sup> David Corn, "Obama Schools Romney," *Mother Jones*, October 22, 2012, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/10/barack-obama-mitt-romney-foreign-policy-debate-boca-aton-florida> (accessed November 2, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Hart, ed., *The Third Generation: Young Conservative Leaders Look to the Future* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Books, 1987), 157.



EPILOGUE:  
BAILOUTS, AUSTERITY, AND OCCUPY EVERYTHING

The point is, today everyone can see that the system is deeply unjust and careening out of control. Unfettered greed has trashed the global economy. And it is trashing the natural world as well. We are overfishing our oceans, polluting our water with fracking and deepwater drilling, turning to the dirtiest forms of energy on the planet, like the Alberta tar sands. And the atmosphere cannot absorb the amount of carbon we are putting into it, creating dangerous warming. The new normal is serial disasters: economic and ecological. These are the facts on the ground.

- Naomi Klein, activist-scholar<sup>1</sup>

I'm so scared of this anti-Wall Street effort. I'm frightened to death...They're having an impact on what the American people think of capitalism.

- Frank Luntz, Republican strategist<sup>2</sup>

After two terms of Bush Administration economic policies, and nearly three decades of full-scale neoliberalism at the federal level, Milton Friedman's experiment in unrestrained greed hit a wall. In 2008, 2.6 million Americans lost their jobs, the majority in the last few months of George W. Bush's presidency. From 2007 to 2012, US banks foreclosed on 3.6 million American homes. But while the banks' own predatory investment and lending practices were the major cause of the economic crisis, they –not the victims of their actions – were quickly rescued by bailouts from the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve System (“the Fed”). In Bush's final months, Congress approved the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), a \$700 billion program to relieve banks of their bad investments. Much more secretively, the Fed (the country's central banking system) committed as much as \$7.7 trillion, not only covering the losses

of the major banks, but also allowing them to further consolidate their power and lobby against new regulatory oversight.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the important cultural implications of electing Barack Obama the country's first African-American president, the Civil Rights Movement's vision of a more equal society remained largely unfulfilled. By 2010, the richest twenty percent of Americans held about eight-five of the nation's wealth, while 15.1% of the population lived in poverty. The wealthiest nation in the world also hosted a homeless population of 3.5 million people, while maintaining 18.5 million empty homes. Moreover, decades of conservative narratives about the need for "color-blind" policies could not hide the truth that American inequality was, in fact, highly racialized. In 2010, the median household wealth of white (non-Hispanic) families was \$110,729, while \$69,590 for Asian families, \$7,424 for Hispanic families, and \$4,955 for Black families.<sup>4</sup>

This reality, however, did not prevent the American Right from exploiting anti-Obama, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant bigotries— as well as disillusion with the inaction of the Democratic Party – in their quest for Republican Congressional gains in the 2010 mid-term elections. More importantly, far right candidates were also bolstered by the US Supreme Court's *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* decision, which granted corporations the right to spend unlimited funds on political campaigns, often anonymously. After decades of increased corporate involvement in political campaigns, *Citizens United* effectively established a new era of neoliberalism – the complete privatization of elections. Two years after the decision, US Senator Bernie Sanders revealed its impact by publishing a list of just twenty-six American billionaires

whose disclosed political campaign contributions for 2012 topped \$61 million – in the first six months of the year alone.<sup>5</sup>

This expansion of elite power did not go uncontested, however. In 2011, mass protests in Egypt, Spain, Greece, England, Wisconsin, Ohio, and elsewhere shifted the public narrative around global and domestic economic policy. Though shaped by local factors, many of these struggles were rooted in austerity measures and other issues related to economic inequality. In August, activists surrounded the White House in opposition to the Keystone XL oil pipeline, intended to increase access to Canada's tar sands, the harvesting of which NASA scientist James Hansen describes as "game over for the planet."<sup>6</sup> Over the course of two weeks of protest, more than 1,000 arrests were made, and President Obama eventually relented to delay the pipeline decision until further environmental studies were conducted. On September 17, another extended protest began when activists established a campsite near Wall Street in New York City's Zuccotti Park.<sup>7</sup>

## OCCUPY WALL STREET

A week after the Wall Street occupation started, the movement received an unlikely boost when footage of a police officer calmly pepper-spraying the faces of peaceful protestors was circulated widely on the internet. The protestors, crying in pain, had been trapped behind police fences – a police strategy known as "kettling" – and could not escape Deputy Inspector Anthony Bologna's assault. The next week, on October 1, New York City police arrested 700 protestors on the Brooklyn Bridge following a march into the streets that appeared to be led by the police themselves. Like the police dogs and



fire hoses of Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, these blatant abuses of protestors acting within their perceived rights –and with legitimate grievances– fanned the flames of discontent. By mid-October, activists all over the world declared a day of action.<sup>8</sup>

On October 15, protests and encampments of various sizes were organized in as many as 950 cities in eighty-two countries. In Spain, where an anti-austerity movement pre-dated Wall Street actions, as many as eighty cities participated. Other protest cities around the world included Tokyo, Hong Kong, London, Rome, Berlin, Manila, Lisbon, Johannesburg, Vienna, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City. In the US, there were actions in Birmingham; Jackson, Mississippi; and Little Rock, Arkansas. There were also demonstrations in Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona. There were marches in New York City and Berkeley, California as well as Seattle, Washington; South Bend, Indiana; and Austin, Texas. In many cities, members of Code Pink and Iraq Veterans Against the War helped organize events, and Cindy Sheehan was one of nineteen demonstrators arrested at a protest in Sacramento, California.<sup>9</sup>

In Iowa, there were demonstrations in Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City, Cedar Falls, and Mason City. Florida protests included St. Petersburg, Tampa, Orlando, Miami, Jacksonville, Daytona Beach, and Tallahassee, while Montana's included Missoula, Billings, Helena, and Butte. In New Mexico, protestors rallied in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Taos, and Las Cruces; in Illinois, they demonstrated in Chicago, Bloomington-Normal, Peoria, Elgin, Aurora, and Rockford.<sup>10</sup>

As the encampments spread to cities large and small, efforts to clear them became more concerted. On October 25, police in Oakland, California fired a tear gas canister directly at Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen's head, fracturing his skull. Police then threw a

flash grenade at protesters who attempted to assist him. As video footage of the day's events circulated on the internet, Oakland, and its history of police violence, became the focus of nationwide attention. A week later, students, teachers, nurses, and others spearheaded Oakland's first general strike since 1946. The day culminated in a march that shut down operations at the Port of Oakland.<sup>11</sup>

In November, additional police violence against Occupy protestors was both widespread and well documented. Among the most iconic images were of pepper-spraying assaults on Elizabeth Nichols (age 20) in Portland, Dorli Rainey (age 84) in Seattle, and a group of students at the University of California-Davis. The attack on the UC-Davis students by Lt. John Pike was especially heinous. While the campus police chief expressed being "very proud" of the day's events, students and faculty called for the resignation of Chancellor Linda Katehi. In the aftermath of the attack, Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich advised Occupy protestors to "go get a job right after you take a bath," while Fox News' Megyn Kelly and Bill O'Reilly agreed on air that pepper spray was "a food product, essentially."<sup>12</sup> In fact, however, police grade pepper spray is five times as potent as the strongest naturally grown pepper and has been linked to as many as seventy deaths in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

By December, police had evicted Occupy encampments in dozens of cities, and many others were voluntarily removed as winter approached. Though many elements of Occupy continued (some activists shifted their focus to preventing home evictions, for example), the movement's popularity and media impact faded. Even at the time of this writing, a year later, Occupy's legacy is unclear, particularly regarding concrete policy changes. Because Occupy wedded itself to a tactic (occupying space), rather than a

strategy to pressure those in power, its momentum was difficult to sustain. Additionally, a rift emerged between militants and those wishing to establish a broad-based coalition. However, in just a few short months, Occupy and its class-based “99% vs. the 1%” framework captured the imagination of a broad spectrum of Americans and shifted the national dialogue. Economic issues dominated the political landscape throughout the 2012 elections, and President Barack Obama’s re-election campaign was rooted in painting Republican nominee Mitt Romney as the face of the wealthy elite.

Future studies of Occupy will no doubt provide deeper insight into its accomplishments and shortcomings. However, one reaction to the movement is especially telling. In December 2011, Frank Luntz, one of the nation’s most highly regarded conservative strategists, addressed a meeting of the Republican Governors Association. Admittedly shaken by the success of OWS, Luntz advised conservatives to abandon the term “capitalism” in favor of “economic freedom” or “free market,” reasoning that the American public increasingly considers capitalism “immoral.” He also told Republican leaders to replace the term “government spending” with “waste” and to encourage protestors to focus their anger away from Wall Street and toward the White House, so that Republicans could capitalize on their feelings of disillusion. Barely two months into the Wall Street occupation, conservative activists not only acknowledged the seriousness of the movement’s strength, they also began considering how to outmaneuver it.<sup>14</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Naomi Klein, "Occupy Wall Street: The Most Important Thing in the World Now," *Nation*, October 6, 2011.
- <sup>2</sup> Chris Moody, "How Republicans Are Being Taught to Talk About Occupy Wall Street," *The Ticket*, December 1, 2011, <http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/ticket/republicans-being-taught-talk-occupy-wall-street-133707949.html> (accessed December 2, 2011).
- <sup>3</sup> David Coldman, "Worst Year for Jobs Since '45," *CNNMoney.com*, January 9, 2009, [http://money.cnn.com/2009/01/09/news/economy/jobs\\_december/](http://money.cnn.com/2009/01/09/news/economy/jobs_december/) (accessed September 10, 2012); Bob Ivry, Bradley Heoun, and Phil Kuntz, "Secret Federal Loans Gave Banks \$13 Billion Undisclosed to Congress," *Bloomberg Markets Magazine*, November 27, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-11-28/secret-fed-loans-undisclosed-to-congress-gave-banks-13-billion-in-income.html> (accessed September 10, 2012).
- <sup>4</sup> Steve Inskeep, "Americans Underestimate U.S. Wealth Inequality," *Morning Edition* (National Public Radio), October 7, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130395070> (accessed September 10, 2012); Dennis Cauchon and Barbara Hansen, "Typical U.S. Family Got Poorer During the Last 10 Years," *USA Today*, September 14, 2011, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2011-09-13/census-household-income/50383882/1> (accessed September 10, 2012); Kevin Fagan, Justin Berton, and Marisa Lagos, "20 Arrested in the Castro," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 11, 2012; National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, *2007 Annual Report*, [http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/2007\\_Annual\\_Report2.pdf](http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/2007_Annual_Report2.pdf) (accessed October 13, 2012); Jann Swanson, "Rental Vacancies at Lowest Point in a Decade, Homeownership Increases," *Mortgage News Daily*, [http://www.mortgagenewsdaily.com/07272012\\_homeownership\\_rates\\_vacancies.asp](http://www.mortgagenewsdaily.com/07272012_homeownership_rates_vacancies.asp) (accessed October 13, 2012); Tami Luhby, "Worsening Wealth Inequality By Race," *CNNMoney*, June 21, 2012, <http://money.cnn.com/2012/06/21/news/economy/wealth-gap-race/index.htm> (accessed September 10, 2012).
- <sup>5</sup> Andy Kroll, "The Republicans' Dark-Money-Moving Machine," *Mother Jones*, January/February 2012; Linette Lopez, "A Quick Rundown of How Much Some of Wall Street's Most Famous Billionaires Have Given to Super PACs This Year," *Business Insider*, July 24, 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/a-quick-rundown-of-how-much-some-of-wall-streets-most-famous-billionaires-have-given-to-super-pacs-this-year-2012-7> (accessed October 9, 2012); Bernie Sanders, "America for Sale: A Report on Billionaires Buying the 2012 Election," July 2012, <http://www.sanders.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/072412Billionaires11.pdf> (accessed October 9, 2012). For more on far Right backlash, see Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio, *Crashing the Tea Party: Mass Media and the Campaign to Remake American Politics* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2011).
- <sup>6</sup> James Hansen, "Game Over for the Climate," *New York Times*, May 9, 2012.
- <sup>7</sup> Elena Schor, "Protest Makes Canada-to-U.S. Pipeline Project Newest Front in Climate Clash," *New York Times*, August 19, 2011; John M. Broder and Dan Frosch, "U.S. Delays Decision on Pipeline Until After Election," *New York Times*, November 10, 2011.
- <sup>8</sup> Colin Moynihan, "80 Arrested as Financial District Protest Moves North," *New York Times Blogs*, September 24, 2011; Sarah Maslin Nir, "Video Appears to Show Wall Street Protesters Being Pepper-Sprayed," *New York Times Blogs*, September 25, 2011; Al Baker and Joseph Goldstein, "Officer's Pepper Spraying of Protesters is Under Investigation," *New York Times Blogs*, September 28, 2011; Al Baker, Colin Moynihan, and Sarah Maslin Nir, "Police Arrest More Than 700 Protesters on Brooklyn Bridge," *New York Times Blogs*, October 1, 2011. The many books and collections already emerging about OWS include: Noam Chomsky, *Occupy* (Brooklyn: Zuccotti Park Press, 2012); Writers for the 99%, *Occupying Wall Street: The Inside Story of an Action that Changed America* (New York: OR Books, 2012); Kate Khatib, Margaret Killjoy, and Mike McGuire, ed., *We Are Many: Critical Reflections on Movement Strategy from Occupation to Liberation* (Oakland: AK Press, 2012); Carla Blumenkranz et al., ed., *Occupy!: Scenes from Occupied America* (New York: Verso, 2011); Todd Gitlin, *Occupy Nation: The Roots, the Spirit, and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street* (New York: It Books, 2012).
- <sup>9</sup> "Occupy Wall Street' Protests Spread to London, Berlin, and South America; Protests Against Corporate Greed and Cutbacks Have Sprung Up Across Europe and South American Inspired by the 'Occupy Wall Street' Movement in New York," *Telegraph*, October 16, 2011; "Protests Go Global, with Some Violence," *Spokesman Review*, October 16, 2011; Nick Allen, "Occupy Wall Street: Over 80 Arrests as Protests Intensify," *Telegraph*, October 16, 2011; Brian Chilson, "Occupy Little Rock Marches This Morning," *Arkansas Times*, October 16, 2011; "Wall Street Protesters Rally in Phoenix, Tucson," *Associate Press*

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<sup>10</sup> Jim Winter, “Protesters Occupy Dubuque,” *Telegraph Herald*, October 16, 2011; “Iowa Protesters Report Being Assaulted at Park,” *Associate Press State & Local Wire*, October 16, 2011; Curtis Krueger and Shelley Rossetter, “Occupy Fever Spreads in Bay,” *St. Petersburg Times*, October 16, 2011; Chris Graham, “Nearly 200 Speak Out in Daytona Beach Rally,” *News-Journal*, October 16, 2011; Russell Contreras, “‘Occupy’ Movement Growing in NM Towns, Cities,” *Associate Press State & Local Wire*, October 16, 2011; Patti Welander, “Anti-Wall St. Group Protests at Parade,” *Pantagraph*, October 16, 2011; Elena Ferrarin, “Occupy Wall Street Protests Mirrored in Elgin, Aurora,” *Chicago Daily Herald*, October 16, 2011; Justin Glawe, “Occupy Peoria Just Getting Going with First Rally,” *Peoria Journal Star*, October 15, 2011.

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<sup>14</sup> Judith Scherr, “U.S.: Occupy Group Plans Take-Over of Bank Foreclosures,” *Inter Press Service*, December 7, 2011; Moody, “How Republicans Are Being Taught to Talk About Occupy Wall Street.”

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

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## Education:

Ph.D., History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, May 2013  
 Dissertation: “‘To Avoid the Unimaginable’: Neoliberalism and the Struggle for American Democracy Since the 1960s,” supervised by Joe Austin, Robert S. Smith, Joseph Rodriguez, Carolyn Eichner, Aims McGuinness, and Mark Rudd

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## Teaching Experience:

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Teaching Assistant, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2008-2011

## Conference Presentations:

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“‘Bodies upon the Gears’: Earth First! and the Slowing of the Neoliberal Machine,” *Midwest Labor and Working-Class History Colloquium*, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, February 2012

“Getting the Goods: Direct Action Activism and the Reagan Revolution,” *Chicago Graduate Student History Conference*, University of Illinois at Chicago, November 2011

"Privatize Everything!: Activism and Resistance in the Neoliberal Era, from Earth First! to Punk Rock," *4<sup>th</sup> Annual History Graduate Student Conference*, Northern Illinois University, October 2011

“Think Global, Act Everywhere: Echoes of the New Left in the Resistance Movements of the Neoliberal Era,” *Mid-America Conference on History*, Oklahoma State University, September 2011

“Bringing Down the Bell: Solidarity and Resonance in the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and Their Allies,” *Midwest Labor and Working-Class History Colloquium*, University of Iowa, April 2011

“Strategy and ‘the Man Behind the Curtain’: Contextualizing Neglected Aspects of Radical Activism,” *Social Science History Association Conference*, Chicago, Illinois, November 2010

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University Service:

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Graduate Affairs Committee, UWM Department of History, 2010-2011

Judge, National History Day, 2010-2012

Faculty Liaison, Alliance of History Graduate Students, 2009-2010

Invited Speaker, UWM Women’s Resource Center Women & Activism Workshop: “Organizing and Advocating for Women’s Rights,” 2012

Introductory Speaker, “The Last Days of the Working Class: An Evening with Jefferson Cowie,” October 2010

Organizer and Moderator, “Another University is Possible” panel discussion, featuring Professors Rachel Ida Buff, Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, and William Ayers, September 2010

Introductory Speaker, “Student Activism Since the 1960s: An Evening with Mark Rudd,” November 2007

Coordinator for campus lectures by Jennifer Baumgardner, Jessica Valenti, Improv Everywhere, the Guerilla Girls, Jefferson Cowie, Henry Rollins, Derrick Jensen, Julia Butterfly Hill, Tom Hayden, Stephen Duncombe, Peter Phillips, Winona LaDuke, Mark Rudd, William Ayers, and Jello Biafra

Founding Member, Act Everywhere, 2009

Founding Member, Alliance of History Graduate Students, 2008

Founding Member, Milwaukee Students for a Democratic Society, 2006