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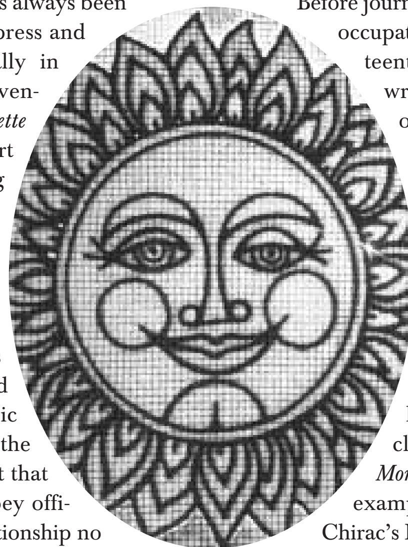
The Media and Democracy

Thomas Ferenczi, *associate editor of* Le Monde, *examines the power of the modern media*

Does the power of the media threaten democracy (understood as the participation of the people in political debate and decision-making)? In answering this question we need to distinguish between three kinds of power: political, economic, and intellectual.

Political power. There has always been a close link between the press and the government, especially in France, where, in the seventeenth century, *La Gazette* was created to support Cardinal Richelieu. During de Gaulle's presidency public radio and television were closely tied to the government. Pompidou, de Gaulle's prime minister (and his successor as president), said that journalists on public radio and television were the voice of France: he meant that they were supposed to obey official orders. This close relationship no longer exists - although, as everyone knows, the 'independent' *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel*'s nominations as chairpersons of the public TV channels, *France 2* and *France 3*, must be approved by the government. On the one occasion - in 1989 - when the *Conseil* appointed Philippe Guilhaume chairman of *Antenne 2* and *France 3* against the government's wishes he had to resign as he could not work without the government's support.



On the whole, however, French governments today respect the freedom of the media. The main problem, in France as in other free societies, is not censorship or the media's obedience of government instructions. Rather, it is the special relationship between journalists and politicians. This has two aspects. In France, the press was born out of politics and literature. Before journalism emerged as a distinct occupation (at the end of the nineteenth century), people who wrote for newspapers were often politicians or writers, or both: Clemenceau and Jaurès, for example, or, before them, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, and Thiers. As a result, the French press has always been strongly ideological: it often prefers ideas to facts. And newspapers have always been quite close to political parties: *Le Monde* to the socialist party, for example, and *Le Figaro* to Chirac's RPR.

Secondly, because France is a highly centralized country - Paris is where everybody comes together - journalists and politicians live and work cheek-by-jowl. To quote former prime minister Raymond Barre's widely used term, journalists and politicians - whether left- or right-wing - belong to the same 'microcosm': when they are young they go the same schools, later they live in the same areas, go to the same holiday resorts, and so on.

There is a real danger for democracy here: namely, that, journalists and politicians,

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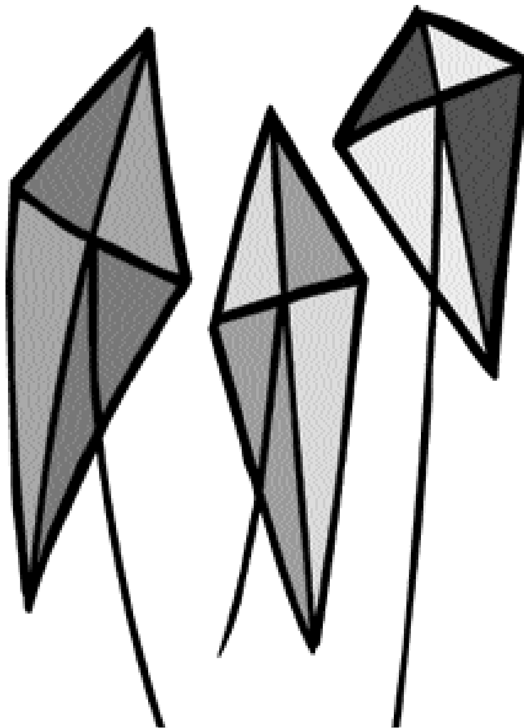
because they are so closely linked, have their own, narrow, idea of what the media should cover - namely, the 'political microcosm' in which 'hyperambitious people with no conviction' (Pierre Bourdieu in *On Television*) compete with each other - and ignore the interests of the people.

This is only a trend, and it can be resisted. *Le Monde* is doing so, at least in part. It publishes serious information and in-depth inquiries and analyses. And, with some other sections of the media, it investigates political corruption and influence-peddling. It is possible to discuss politics seriously and to offer information which strengthens the public sphere and allows people to criticize politicians. Yet some sections of the media do cover politics in a way that undermines democracy. In the recent referendum on whether to shorten the president's term of office from seven to five years, about 70 per cent of the electorate stayed at home: the media must take some responsibility for this.

Economic power. The media industry is not only being transformed by dramatic technological innovations - cable, satellite, digitalization, the Internet, for example - and by a broader social changes - the emergence of an 'information society'; it is also undergoing an economic revolution. A striking process of concentration and internationalization is underway in Europe: today, half a dozen conglomerates dominate the European media market. The two biggest groups in France today are Bouygues and Vivendi. Bouygues - an industrial group specialising in construction - owns *TF1*, the first TV channel, which was privatized in 1987. Vivendi has fingers in many pies: the print media (it owns the weekly magazine *L'Express* and many professional magazines); television (it recently bought *Canal+*, the first European pay-TV channel); publishing; the Internet; and music and film. It has recently merged with Seagram, which owns Universal: the new company will be the world's second largest communications group after AOL/Time Warner and will be powerful enough to compete not only with AOL/Time-Warner, but also with Viacom/CBS, Newscorp, and Bertelsmann, amongst others.

This process of concentration threatens democracy and the freedom of expression in two ways. On the one hand, these media groups, with their close ties to government and special economic interests, will either try to suppress news they regard as harmful, or, conversely, will highlight information that serves their own interests. On the other hand - and this is more serious - there is a danger that these groups will give priority to profitability rather than information. Audience- rather than mission-driven, they will offer entertainment rather than serious analysis or documentaries. In the words of an anonymous ditty Matthew Engel quotes in his *Tickle the Public*:



> Tickle the public,
> make them grin
> The more you tickle,
> the more you'll win
> Teach the public,
> you'll never get rich
> You'll live like a beggar
> and die in a ditch.

Of course, any print publication or broadcast channel must think about its financial balance. And it would be unfair - indeed, naive and polemical - to say that some media are audience-oriented while others - the noble few - think only of the public interest. It is, above all, a question of priority. The only way to fight the commercialization of the media - and to help democracy - is to make sure that journalistic criteria are given priority over profit and money.

Intellectual power. Contemporary critics of the media, such as Pierre Bourdieu and Régis Debray, argue that the media suffers under a triple dictatorship. First, the dictatorship of time: the media are obsessed with having the latest information and with scoops. As a result journalists have less and less time to check facts and avoid mistakes. Consequently they foster amnesia which creates, in Bourdieu's words, a 'dehistoricized and dehistoricizing', a 'fragmented and fragmenting' vision of the world. Secondly, the dictatorship of emotion: the more shocking an event is the more likely it is that it will be written about or broadcast, the aim being to appeal to the audience's emotions. Thirdly, the dictatorship of the image: priority is given to events which can be illustrated; those which cannot be presented in images will be ignored.

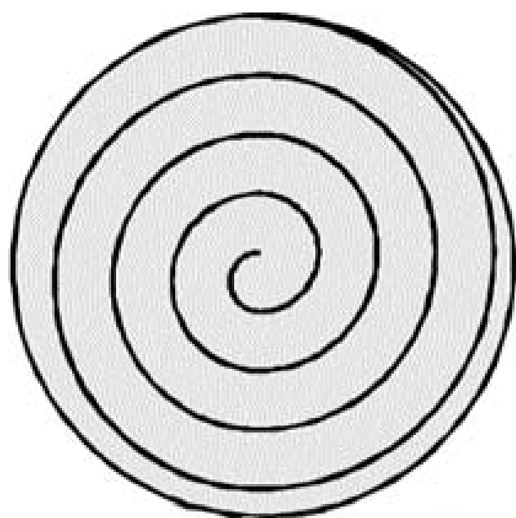
So what can journalists do to foster the detachment and knowledge that promotes better understanding of events? It is important to remember that some sections of the media are exempt from the dictatorship of time: parts of *Le Monde*, for instance, contain reflective analyses and reports written with hindsight. And the dictatorships of emotion and the image can be challenged by the media; one way to do this might be for media and academics to cooperate more closely. (Although, of course, journalism that is not informed by academic work, by science or research, is not necessarily superficial or sensational.)

Democracy would be threatened if the media were too closely linked to to political parties or big corporations, or if the media were the dominant power in society. Democracy needs checks and balances: the political system needs to be strong, as does the academy, the judiciary, the media, and so on. The balance amongst these sources of power will vary over time as each struggles to assert itself.

Thomas Ferenczi is an associate editor of Le Monde*, responsible for the editorial page. This is an edited version of a talk he gave to the CSD Research Seminar in October 2000.*

Muslim or Citizen?

Abdelwahab El-Affendi *traces the evolution of Islamist thinking on citizenship*



According to Bernard Lewis, the concept of citizenship is alien to Islamic thinking. This assertion, like many others Professor Lewis has recently made about Islam, is mistaken. There is an Islamic term that can be regarded as a precise equivalent of the western term 'citizen' (in the sense of being a full member of the political community with both a right and an obligation to participate in public affairs): 'Muslim'.

In the early Muslim community the identity of religious and political community was a given. Being a Muslim meant enjoying immediate and full membership of the political community, in a positive, even 'republican', sense of active citizenship. This is summed up in the famous *hadith*, 'Muslims are as one in contracting obligations (of protection), and the least among them can do so. And whoever violates the undertaking of a Muslim is accursed by God, the angels and all humanity.'

As the well-known Egyptian writer and legal expert, Tarek El-Bechri, has noted, Lewis is confused about the referent of the actual and conceptual political community. The Islamic concept of political community is based on religion. Being a Muslim is a sufficient and necessary condition of full citizenship. The status of non-members is dependent on their contractual relationship with the original community. The overall conceptual framework adopted by the post-World War II international system is, in principle, no different; it is only the basis of citizenship which differs. Modern polities - and international human rights instruments, including the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - take the historical association of an individual with a certain territorial entity as the basis of membership of the community. All those who do not qualify in this respect are excluded from full membership. Non-citizens in any country are not given equal rights.

POLITICAL COMMUNITY AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

As long as the distinction between religious and political community was not an issue (as was the case in most pre-modern Muslim communities) the problem of citizenship posed few problems. In theory at least, all Muslims enjoyed equal rights as members of the political community, and were obliged to participate actively in the affairs of society on the basis of the principle of *al-Amr bi'l-Ma'rouf wa'l-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (enjoining what is right and speaking against wrong); the Qur'an posits this as the defining characteristic of the Muslim community and the attribute which makes this the best of communities. In practice, of course, things were somewhat different. For logistical and political reasons, the majority of Muslims were usually excluded from political participation. The logistical problem stemmed from the expansion of the Muslim state to encompass huge areas where communication was a problem. As long as the bulk of Muslims lived in Madinah (up to 632-650/AH 30), full participation was guaranteed. Practically the whole of the community (including a large proportion of women) met five times daily in the Prophet's mosque, which was also the seat of government. Individuals (including - as many anecdotes reveal - women) could raise any issue they wanted and even force the government to take their point of view into consideration. But with the expansion of the state, the system collapsed; it become unable to accommodate the claims and grievances of citizens in outlying areas such as Egypt and Iraq.

The citizens then took matters into their own hands and resorted to violence, leading to the conflicts that culminated in the murder of the third Khalifa Othman and the breakdown of the original Khilafah system (661/AH 40). (Eventually, authoritarian systems that greatly restricted the rights and freedoms of citizens were established.)

> 'There is an Islamic term that can be regarded as a precise equivalent of the western term 'citizen': 'Muslim'

As the Egyptian writer Fahmi Huweidi notes, the issues raised by these conflicts concerned mainly the rights of Muslims. Non-Muslims, reasonably content with their unparalleled protected status, were scarcely affected by the turmoil. Indeed, their situation improved steadily, as their special expertise in medicine, learning and administration helped them into influential positions.

This state of affairs - in which non-Muslims were content with their status as 'resident aliens' with no political ambition

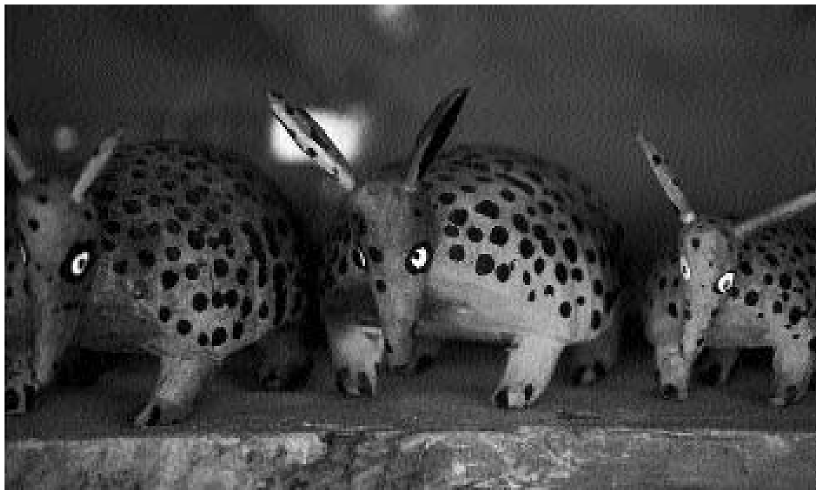
- came to an end at the beginning of the modern era, to which Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 was an explosive introduction. The rising power of the West and its intrusion into Muslim territories gave non-Muslims the incentive and opportunity to ask for a more privileged status. One product of this was the 'capitulations': special exemption from the laws of the land given to non-Muslim resident individuals, who were protected by the major Western powers.

This did not, of course, amount to the granting of full citizenship rights. Quite the reverse, in fact, since it skirted the issue altogether and confirmed the status of non-Muslims as aliens protected by foreign powers. As the famous nineteenth century Tunisian reformer and statesman Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi complained, this anomalous arrangement undermined the very idea of the state and thus cut the ground from under the feet of political reform. In order to undertake reforms and create the conditions for the enjoyment of citizenship rights, one has to establish the state as the focus of political community and the repository of citizens' loyalty. Creating a privileged class which is at once outside the political community and above it - a class whose loyalty is to foreign powers, not to the state - destroys the very basis of progress towards inclusive politics.

The encroachment of western powers also led to the search for a new concept of community. Early Muslim reformers saw in colonialism a threat not only to political rights and religious identity but also to the very humanity of individuals in affected societies. Colonialism and the rising power of the West was seen by the Iranian-born activist Sayyid Jamal El-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) and his close associate Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) as holding the prospect of turning vast populations into mere cattle herded by the powerful Europeans. They therefore envisaged a broad anti-colonial 'Third World' coalition which would include the bulk of non-European peoples. The two reformers' journal, *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*, published in exile in Paris after the British forced them out of Egypt, addressed itself not only to Muslims, but to 'oriental peoples' in general, and sought to promote the idea of *Al-Jami'ah al-Sharrqiyyah* (Oriental Commonwealth).

'Maududi argued that the national state could lead to a Muslim state as much as a lemon tree could yield a crop of pears '

At the same time the concept of *Al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah* (Muslim Commonwealth) was being raised as a slogan. This was complemented by the concept of 'neighbours', used to refer to non-Muslims resident in Muslim countries. Together, these concepts implied a state of affairs in which non-Muslims led an autonomous and self-contained existence parallel to, but not as part of, that of the Muslim community. However, the very invocation of these concepts intimated an awareness of the need to define relations between Muslims and their 'neighbours' in new terms; in this way they could both meet the challenges facing the relevant communities, which were now united in their fate and needed to join hands to face common dangers. This perception was implemented practically by the leaders of the nationalist movement in Egypt: they emphasized the unity of all Egyptians at the expense of religious affiliation.



Later Muslim thinkers, however, tended to re-emphasize the Muslim community as the primary focus of allegiance and as the basis of political action. Purists such as the Indian Islamist thinker Abu'l-Ala al-Maududi (1903-1979) and the Egyptian thinker Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) rejected the early compromises and argued for an exclusively Muslim community. Maududi launched a fierce attack on the nationalist leaders of the Muslim League who were agitating for the formation of a separate Muslim state in India on the basis of national rather than religious affiliation. In a famous lecture delivered at the University of Aligarah in India in 1940, Maududi argued that the national state could lead to a Muslim state as much as a lemon tree could yield a crop of pears. The Islamic state, he argued, is an ideologically determined polity with a universal outlook that does not recognize race or similar grounds as a basis of citizenship. The moral basis of the modern national state, consisting as it does of secular, utilitarian principles, and narrow ethnic and national loyalties, is the antithesis of the true Islamic state; this latter state rises above such narrow loyalties, addresses itself to humanity as a whole, and recognizes only God as sovereign. The mindset of those brought up in the ethos of the national state makes them unfit to work in or for the true Islamic state, let alone be in a position to establish it. Only true believers can create and work for the Islamic state, he stated. The way to build such state is, through prolonged struggle and suffering, to create a genuinely Muslim community (in the same way as the Prophet created his community); the proper state will be the natural fruit of this type of association. Sayyid Qutb expressed exactly the same sentiments in his *Ma'alim fi'l-Tariq* (1964).

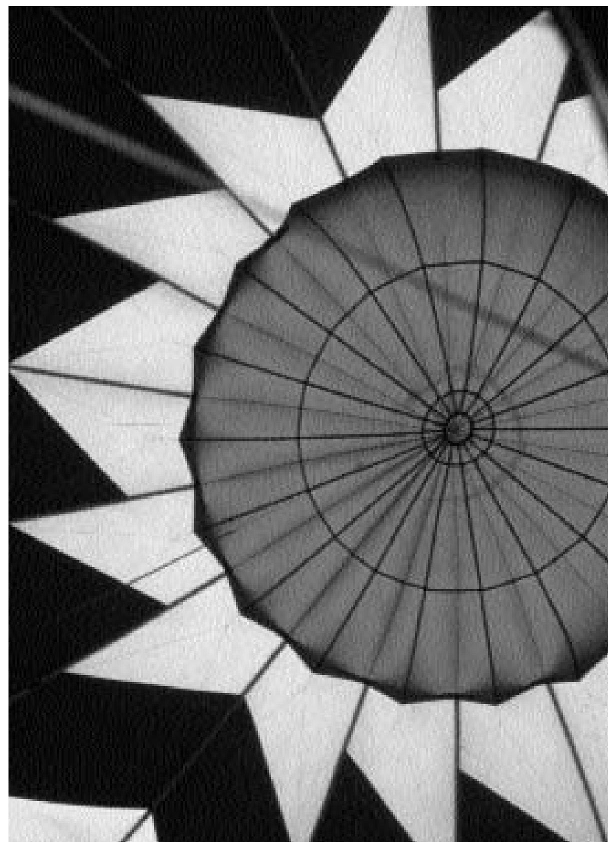
According to this viewpoint, the problem of citizenship for non-Muslims in such a polity does not arise, since the state would be formed exclusively for and by genuine Muslims. Maududi did later refer to the rights of non-Muslims in Muslim societies, but he reiterated the traditional view that they could live as protected minorities. They could not occupy central posts in the state, and certainly not senior leadership positions or membership of the Shura Council that elects the head of state.

Other leaders were less categorical. The founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*), Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), did accept the modern national state and the parliamentary system as a basis for progress towards a genuine Islamic state. The *Ikhwan* also implicitly accepts the nation-state (in this case Egypt) as a framework for political action. The Brotherhood continues to argue for a measure of equality for non-Muslims. However, its position has not yet crystallized in a clear stance, in spite of a number of public statements. In 1999, *Ikhwan* supreme leader Mustafa Mashhour created a storm when he allegedly said in a press interview that Christians should not be admitted to the military.

ACCEPTING EQUALITY?

In recent decades Islamist positions have begun to evolve slowly towards a more forthright acceptance of full citizenship rights for non-Muslims. The pioneering work of Egyptian-born Fathi Osman (1928-) has provided a significant impetus in this respect. Osman argued early for Muslims to transcend the old categories and classifications denoted by the term *dhimmi* (member of a protected or covenanted minority) and accept non-Muslims as full citizens. Osman has argued that, with globalization, Muslims cannot escape interacting with non-Muslims on the world stage, whether as minorities in non-Muslim countries, as a 'minority' on this planet, or in international relations generally. In such a context, it would be very difficult for Muslims to defend Muslim minorities against discrimination if they themselves practised it. They must therefore accept some form of reciprocity and international cooperation.

Various Islamic thinkers, including Fahmi Huweidi, Tarek El-Bechri, Salim al-'Awwa, Ahmed Kemal Abu'l-Majd, and Rashid al-Ghannoushi, developed similar views in the 1980s. Huweidi recognizes that traditional Islamic provisions and concepts were more than fair and quite advanced for their time; however, he argues, they have been overtaken by modern political developments and the emergence of the concept of equal citizenship. He calls for the implementation of basic principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah at the expense of the accumulated Muslim traditions and earlier interpretations of these sources.



Al-'Awwa has developed a thesis based on the opposition between the 'legitimacy of conquest' and the 'legitimacy of liberation'. The traditional Islamic polity dealt with non-Muslims as a conquered people, since it incorporated non-Muslims within its borders mainly on the basis of conquest. However, modern Muslim states have come into existence as a result of a liberation struggle in which non-Muslims participated equally. Non-Muslims have thus earned their right as full citizens; the old formulas no longer apply. Rashid al-Ghannoushi argues that citizenship in Muslim polities is based on two criteria: religious affiliation and residence. Muslims who are not resident in the particular state, or non-Muslims resident within it, cannot be full citizens. The latter may become citizens if they accept the legitimacy of the Islamic state, but they will still not be full citizens, and they may not take up the highest post, that of head of state. But al-Ghannoushi rejects most of Maududi's restrictions on the rights of non-Muslims, especially the prescription that non-Muslims may not participate in parliament or hold top jobs such as that of prime minister. There is no harm in this, he argues, since many of the top posts in the modern state do not carry absolute authority but are bound by law and counter-balanced by other institutions.

> 'In recent decades Islamist positions have begun to evolve slowly towards a more forthright acceptance of full citizenship rights for non-Muslims'

This latter point is taken to its limits by El-Bechri, whose starting point is the distinction made by the medieval jurist al-Mawardi between the 'minister of delegation' - who takes on the full authority of the supreme leader in his field - and the 'executive minister' - who is confined to following orders. Mawardi says that non-Muslims may take the second post but not the first. El-Bechri argues that, in the modern democratic state, not even the post of head of state enjoys absolute authority. Consequently, all posts in the modern Islamic state should be open to non-Muslim citizens; they should have full rights. El-Bechri also takes a radical look at the concept of citizenship rights in modern political thought, and finds that modern human rights, especially the rights of holding public office, are connected to citizenship in a particular state.

In the traditional Muslim polity rights were assigned to individuals or groups on the basis of the terms of their membership of the political community. While it was natural to restrict membership in the traditional Muslim political community to Muslims, modern exigencies have made it imperative to treat minorities on an equal footing. This means full membership in the community and equal rights for all, without regard to religious affiliation.

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The Roma: Rights and Recognition

Anti-gypsyism - a distinct and long-established form of racism - flourishes in Europe today, as **Bernard Rorke** *explains*

Today, across Eastern and Central Europe, there is a chasm between the bundle of rights citizens in post-communist political systems have been endowed with, and the capacity of the Roma populations to access those rights. This is largely a consequence of a long-standing and resilient racialized imagining. This imagining constitutes a radical misrecognition which, to paraphrase Charles Taylor (*Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, 1994), is a form of oppression that imprisons the Roma in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. The repercussions of this racist misrecognition range from social segregation and exclusion to - in the civil societies of those countries where authoritarian-populist regimes have emerged - a widespread tolerance of racially motivated acts of violence against the Roma.

Such misrecognition affect the Roma's life chances: their access to education, housing, health provision, and opportunities for employment. As Nancy Fraser points out (*Justice Interruptus*, 1997), in the real world virtually every struggle against injustice, when properly understood, implies demands for both redistribution and recognition. Inasmuch as access to these rights and resources is a matter of distributive justice, a politics of recognition - which asserts that assimilation is no longer the price of equal respect - must precede, or at least proceed in tandem with, policies of effective redistribution.

> 'The grim genealogy of exclusion stretches from officially sanctioned "gypsy-hunts" and edicts of banishment in the seventeenth century, to mass extermination in the mid-twentieth century holocaust'

More than a year before the outbreak of conflict in Kosovo, Romani writer and activist Orhan Galjus warned of the perils facing the Roma, and predicted that 'if there is war in Kosovo, Roma will again be blamed for non-participation, just as they were in the Serbian-Croatian-Bosnian conflict. They will be stigmatised as deserters and traitors' (*Index on Censorship*, 4/1998). Unsubstantiated allegations of collusion with the Serbs resulted in murders, abductions, arson attacks and widespread intimidation of Roma by Albanians. Caught between two warring ethnic nationalisms, the Roma have seen yet another grim chapter in their persecution unfold. Apart from a few remaining scattered communities, the ethnic cleansing of the Roma, their wholesale expulsion from Kosovo - which is under the supervision of the international community - is all but complete.

AFTER COMMUNISM

Anti-gypsyism - a distinct and long-established species of racism - is not confined to the Balkans. On the contrary, it is prevalent throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Although patterns of persecution have varied enormously over the centuries, policies towards the Roma, as Jean-Pierre Liégeois argues (*Roma/Gypsies*, 1995), have always constituted a negation of the people, their language, and their culture. Broadly, these policies can be grouped in three categories: exclusion, containment, and assimilation. The grim genealogy of exclusion stretches from officially sanctioned 'gypsy-hunts' and edicts of banishment in the seventeenth century, to mass extermination in the mid-twentieth century holocaust, and, finally, at the close of the millenium, to persecution and expulsion in the name of 'ethnic cleansing'.

Any fleeting optimism that the political transitions following the fall of communism might herald a brighter future for the Romani populations of Eastern and Central Europe region soon evaporated. As a Minority Groups International Report states, while communist policies towards the Roma were 'far from exemplary', in many cases there was at least a bottom line in terms of social provision. Since 1989 that bottom line has disappeared. Material impoverishment has been accompanied by new existential contingencies: with the eruption of a plethora of exclusivist nationalisms across the region, vilification and scapegoating of the Roma has assumed lethal proportions. In Romania, widespread acts of violence, looting and destruction of property have often culminated in the expulsion of entire Roma communities. A sense of just how perilous the situation has become for Roma in Romania can be garnered from a 1994 Human Rights Watch report:

> Mob violence . . . reveals a type of lynch law that is often supported by the local government. The local authorities are, in some cases, active participants in the violence, but

more frequently are involved in creating the climate of extrajudicial abuse of Roma, and are active participants in the obstruction of justice after the crimes have been committed. This jeopardises the safety of Roma in Romania and has set a dangerous precedent for the rule of law.

These outbreaks of violence are the contemporary equivalents of earlier pogroms: in many cases mobs of villagers have assembled to the sound of church bells before descending upon and attacking Romani districts.

Even where the transition from communist rule has been virtually bloodless, its impact on Roma populations has been traumatic. In Czechoslovakia, as Will Guy observed, 'the first tangible experience of this brave new world was not a sudden expansion of civic liberties but of harsh realities as many were flung out of their predominantly manual jobs in the now virtually redundant heavy industries' (Tong (ed.), *Gypsies,* 1998).

The situation for many thousands of Roma worsened radically with the separation in 1993 of Czechoslovakia into two nation-states. As a result of the 1992 Act on Citizenship, in the Czech Republic many Roma were effectively rendered stateless. The combination of stringent conditions and lengthy and complex procedures to acquire citizenship adversely affected many thousands of Roma to such an extent that members of the US Congress described the measures as 'the most extensive revocation of citizenship since the end of the Second World War'. In many cases, local authorities told human rights lawyers that Roma without Czech citizenship 'would be treated like foreigners in future and would lose their benefits under the law'. These threats were subsequently put into practice.

Throughout the 1990s, Václav Havel's exhortations to his fellow citizens to allow for the richest possible participation of all in public life seem to have fallen on deaf ears. In his 'State of the Republic' address in December 1998, Havel warned of a crisis in the culture of political and public life, 'a culture that can be measured by how many Roma have been lynched or murdered, by how terribly some of us behave to our fellow human beings simply because they have a different colour of skin'. Czech

sensitivity to the Roma issue may be gauged by the failure of the government to remove a pig farm from the site of a World War II concentration camp for Roma in the town of Lety (near Písek). Racist violence against Roma has continued unabated. Perhaps the best known case occurred on February 1998,

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when a 26-year old Romani mother of four, Helena Birhariova, was kicked and beaten unconscious, and then murdered, by skinheads before being thrown into the river Elbe. This atrocity brought the total of known racist murders in the Czech Republic since the fall of communism to twenty-nine.

In neighbouring Slovakia the attitudes towards its 'dark-skinned inhabitants' were clearly articulated by the former Premier, Vladimír Meciar. His infamous remarks about 'dealing' with the extended reproduction of 'the socially unadaptable population' attracted foreign condemnation but found a wide and appreciative domestic audience. Commenting on the higher birthrate of the Roma in comparison to that of 'whites', he asserted that 'children are giving birth to children, or grandmothers are giving birth to children - poorly adaptable mentally, badly adaptable socially, with serious health problems, who are simply a great burden on this society'.

With anti-Roma sentiment playing such a significant role in Slovak national populism, it is hardly surprising that other elements in Slovak society have gone beyond the rhetoric and resorted to direct and brutal methods in order to 'deal' with the minority population. Racially-motivated violence perpetrated by skinhead gangs and other violent ultra-nationalists to further the quest for a 'white Slovakia' are widespread. Some idea of the depth of Slovak racism may be adduced from the statement issued by an adjudicator in Britain who, in 1998, granted asylum to four Romani families and ruled that their claims of persecution were genuine:

> I consider such attacks on Roma are persistent and racist attitudes by the police are pervasive in Slovakia and condoned by the higher authorities. . . . Given recent political developments in Slovakia and the deteriorating climate for Roma, there is a reasonable likelihood that what they will face is serious and persistent ill-treatment. Their fear of persecution on return to Slovakia is well-founded.

The 'climate for Roma' has continued to deteriorate. On the night of August 22, 2000, in the city of Zilina, three assailants

armed with baseball bats broke into the home of a Roma family screaming 'We will kill you, black faces!' and attacked the youngest children as they lay sleeping in bed. When their mother, Anastazia Balazova, intervened to protect her daughters she was brutally assaulted; two days later she died from the severe head injuries she had sustained. Politically controlled by the far-right Slovak National party (SNS), the town Zilina has been described in the *Prague Post* as a hotbed of intolerance. Its mayor, former SNS chairman Jan Slota, famously suggested that what was needed to solve the Roma issue is 'a small courtyard and a long whip'.

THE LIMITS OF MULTI-CULTURALISM

'Anti-gypsyism' is not confined to Eastern and Central Europe - as official and popular attitudes to Roma in the 'older' democracies of the European Union show.

The arrival of Slovak and Czech Roma asylum seekers in Britain in 1997 tested the limits of Britain's much vaunted 'multi-culturalism' and the once-cherished tradition of providing a haven for the oppressed. In Dover, the far-right National Front were back on the streets - at the request of the local citizenry, they claimed - to protest against the presence of the Roma, while local parents threatened to remove their children from schools which accepted Slovak children. The official response was to impose new entry restrictions and detain and deport new arrivals. The press - national, provincial, broadsheet, and tabloid - spoke of invasions and floods by 'Giro Czechs' looking for hand-outs. *The Sun*, having finally located an ethnic minority it could abuse without recrimination, declared that 'gypsies' are

> NOT refugees fleeing persecution. They are illegal immigrants who fell off the back of a lorry. And we are daft enough to feed, clothe and house them at the taxpayer's expense. We're even going to teach them English. The only words they should be taught are: 'Help me get back to where I belong.'

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook made clear the New Labour response to the situation - and the incoherence of a 'Third Way' position on human rights - when he travelled to Prague in November 1997. He scolded the Czechs, telling them they needed to address the question of 'why so many of its people saw no future for themselves within the Czech lands' - and thus implicitly acknowledged that persecution exists. At the same time, he declared that:

> 'The continued ostracism of Europe's most significant ethnic minority from meaningful participation in political processes is perhaps the most critical of democratic deficits in contemporary Europe'

> It is very important that Britain gets across the message that it is not a soft touch for anyone claiming asylum falsely. I give a very clear message to those who are contemplating travelling to Britain that Britain does not have an open door policy to those who may allege persecution and cannot then prove it.

In other words, individuals who claim asylum on this basis are effectively 'bogus economic refugees' preying on 'soft-touch' Britain. Here a populist tough stance on immigration converges neatly with deeply entrenched prejudices about 'lying, thieving gypsies'.

The diasporic experience of the Roma, the historic resilience of their distinct sense of cultural identity, and the growing sophistication of demands at local, national and transnational levels for formalized recognition of this distinctiveness in the polities within which they reside: these all reveal fundamental lacunae in our inherited political traditions. Norberto Bobbio, writing about current debates on human rights (*The Age of Rights*, 1996) is correct to state that the problem we face is not philosophical but political: it is not a matter of knowing which and how many human rights there are, what their nature is and on what foundation they are based, whether they are natural or historical, absolute or relative; it is a question of finding the surest method for guaranteeing rights, and preventing their continuing violation in spite of all the solemn declarations that have been made. The continued ostracism - the racist exclusion - of Europe's most significant ethnic minority from meaningful participation in political processes is perhaps the most critical of democratic deficits in contemporary Europe. Despite our pious cosmopolitan platitudes, the maltreatment of the Romani people provides a stark reminder of just how much our democracies - liberal and illiberal, old and new alike - remain constrained by ideologies of national identity that are, in Sheldon Wolin's words, 'tightly communitarian rather than hospitably pluralist'.

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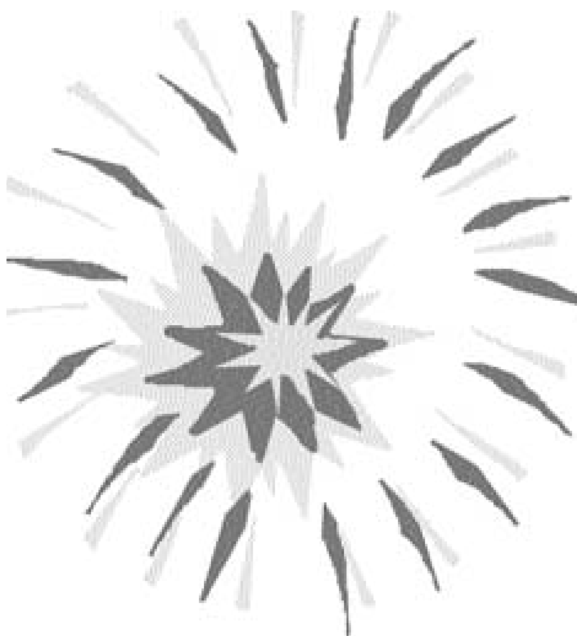
Liberalism in Brazil

Milton Tosto *discusses the language, meaning, and intentions of liberalism in post-authoritarian Brazil*



Two works have shaped contemporary discussions in Brazil about liberalism: Raymundo Faoro's *The Power Owners - The Formation of Brazilian Patronage* (1958 and 1972) and José Guilherme Merquior's *Liberalism: Old and New* (1989). These works repay study for two reasons: first, because in them Faoro and Merquior are trying to unite liberalism and democracy - and so promote democratic thought in Brazilian political culture. Secondly, because - though their approaches are different - these books elaborate a democratic understanding of liberalism in terms of specifically Brazilian historical and theoretical contexts.

Brazil's history can be divided into three distinct phases: the colonial period - from the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century - when the country was ruled by Portugal; the period of parliamentary monarchy (1822-1889); and the republican period (from 1889 to the present day), during which two types of republican government and two dictatorships have ruled Brazil.

When Brazil gained independence from Portugal, two political movements tried to shape the new, post-colonial, political system: the 'radicals' and the 'moderates'. The radicals, who sought the abolition of slavery, direct representation, and political reforms, had little success. The 'moderates', by contrast, proponents of a 'conservative liberalism', were successful: they created a parliamentary monarchy based on indirect representation, a two-party political system, and an independent civil service.

They also retained slavery, as they wanted to maintain the economic liberty of slave-holders. As a result, Brazil was the last country to abolish slavery: it traded in slaves until 1850, while domestic slavery remained in place until 1888.

CONSERVATIVES, DISSIDENT LIBERALS, AND REPUBLICANS

After 1850 a new generation of liberals entered the political arena. They felt that three-and-a-half centuries of slavery had produced a degenerate national character. They also argued that - related to this - the political system was a system for the distribution of spoils: the monarch, instead of representing the different interests of the population, was distributing the spare resources generated by the slave-based economy. They labelled this practice 'patronage'. The overly-centralized nature of the state, they argued, meant that using parliament to abolish slavery would have little effect.

Dissident liberals tried to increase the power of parliament by launching a strong movement against domestic slavery and by showing support for democratic ideals. The anti-slavery campaign aimed to modify the core of conservative liberalism defended by Brazilian state-builders. The conservative liberals had preserved political unity and indirect representation in parliament by obstructing radical politics and political rights; the opponents of slavery showed how this political stance was incompatible with a liberal state.

Republicans - who also played a leading role in the anti-slavery campaign - regarded liberalism as an old-fashioned, monarchic doctrine. For their part, liberal dissidents, though they had to demonstrate how liberalism differed from conservatism and that it supported progressive policies, did not want to promote republican politics. There are two reasons for this disjunction between liberalism and republicanism. Firstly, unlike republicans, liberal dissidents, although they were critical of conservative liberals, respected the latter's accomplishments, that is, the construction of a representative liberal monarchy. Secondly, dissident liberals thought that a republic could only be sustained by a population of independent and uncorrupted citizens. In their view, the size of the country, its racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, together with the perverse influences of slavery, meant that Brazilian citizens did not have these characteristics. So, although dissident liberals wanted to abolish slavery and to see basic rights introduced, they thought a monarchy superior to the republican form of government.

'Faoro and Merquior are trying to unite liberalism and democracy - and so promote democratic thought in Brazilian political culture'

After the proclamation of the Republic in 1889, liberals looked back on the nineteenth century as a golden epoch. They also believed that the fact that the military had created the Republic would lead to dictatorship. Both attitudes - together with the problem of establishing an unified Brazilian identity - contributed to the partial disappearance of liberal political discourse in the first half of the twentieth century in Brazil.

NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF LIBERALISM

The first contemporary author to rethink the meaning of liberalism was Raymundo Faoro. In *The Power Owners* - a political critique of the nature of power focused on Brazilian 'high officialdom' (see below) - he elaborates a republican liberalism based on democratic ideals. Combining arguments taken from the nineteenth-century anti-slavery movement - the critique of patronage - with sixteenth-century Italian republican thinking (which states that political power can be maintained through the use of force), Faoro produces an interpretation of Brazilian history that could have almost been written by a seventeenth-century English republican.

Faoro emphasizes the importance of democratic ideas such as political participation, the accountability of power, and the rejection of discretionary power in order to promote a liberal state 'ruled by law, not by men'; dissident liberals, he argues, who just defended civil rights, did not understand the relevance of politics in preserving liberty.

Faoro demolishes various assumptions held by nineteenth-century conservatives, liberals, and republicans in their disputes with each other: not just the idea that conservative liberalism undermines the conditions for a slave society and the view that liberalism and republicanism are incompatible, but also the argument that slavery caused the collapse of the political system. On the contrary, he argues, slavery was itself a consequence of a spoil-system (inherited from Portugal) constructed by political patronage. This state, he asserts, had been built to solve conflicting interests through a system of patronage; the beneficiaries of which were not citizens but the regulatory bodies of 'high officialdom' - what Faoro calls the 'bureaucratic status groups'. (The term 'bureaucratic status groups' is the cornerstone of Faoro's argument. The nineteenth-century Brazilian state was not a full rational bureaucracy, nor a feudal aristocratic status group, he argues, but a 'high officialdom' unified by the sole characteristic of holding prerogative power.)

'The nineteenth-century Brazilian state was not a full rational bureaucracy, nor a feudal aristocratic status group, Faoro argues, but a 'high officialdom' unified by the sole characteristic of holding prerogative power'

J. G. Merquior rethinks the meaning of liberalism differently. Analysing the concept of liberty in *Liberalism: Old and New*, he argues that there are two types of liberalism: 'Whig liberalism', which emerged during the English civil war; and 'social liberalism', born during the decline of the British empire in the twentieth century. Brazilian liberalism, Merquior claims, has always been of the 'Whig' variety. Whig liberalism was based on four 'negative' values (that is, values founded on a 'negative' conception of liberty: 'that where there is no law there is no transgression'): moral pluralism, progress, individualism, and accountable government. This type of liberalism, he asserts, is based on a political, not a social, critique of power and so is incapable of dealing with the problem of the concentration of power. He advocates a social liberalism which focuses both on the illegitimacy of a tyrannical government that uses prerogative power and on the social conditions that make such tyrannical government possible. He proposes a shift from a political critique of power - Faoro's - to a social critique.

According to Merquior, social liberalism unites liberalism and democracy. Social liberalism promotes agrarian and educational reform, creates unemployment insurance, and fosters voluntary birth control. By going beyond the Whig form of liberalism Merquior attempts both to transform nineteenth-century Brazilian conservative liberalism into a progressive alternative and to answer the aspirations for social justice which originated in the proclamation of the republic.

Though Faoro and Merquior have the same goal - to unify liberalism and democracy – they approach it quite differently Faoro's liberal republicanism sees Merquior's social liberalism as a new form of patronage. Merquior finds Faoro's historic interpretation too static and premodern as it focuses on the object of power - high officialdom - and not on the social nature of the power. By asserting the differences between the Faoro's and Merquior's thought one might be able to detach liberalism and democracy from a Whig perspective and - in the Brazilian context - unify them theoretically.

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The Highest Purpose

Fred Dallmayr *surveys contemporary discussions of cosmopolitan democracy*

'There is hope,' Immanuel Kant writes in *Idea for a General History with Cosmopolitan Intent* (1784), 'that after many revolutions and transformations the highest purpose of nature, namely a universal cosmopolitan condition, will finally emerge as the seedbed allowing the unfolding of all human endowments'. Kant is not unaware of obstacles on the path leading to the 'highest purpose of nature'. A major difficulty resides in nature's tendency to pursue goals only through detours: particularly through the detour of the 'unsociable sociability' of humans, whose striving for selfish aims yields social benefits only indirectly or seemingly by accident. Hence, civility and just governance are arduous achievements requiring the progressive straightening of the 'crooked timber' of humanity. The problem surfaces acutely on the global or cosmopolitan level. Through incessant armament, wars, and devastations of all kinds, nature guides humankind to its purpose: to exit from the lawless condition of savages and to enter into a global 'league of nations' (*Völkerbund*) governed by common laws.

The goal of global governance–of some kind of 'bonding' among countries and peoples–has been a long-standing human aspiration. It has been articulated and practically promoted by–apart from Kant–a host of intellectuals and statesmen, from the Abbé de Sainte-Pierre to Woodrow Wilson and beyond. In this tradition, 'global governance' does not necessarily mean a global government patterned on the model of the nation-state, that is, a state writ-large or a global empire. Conscious of the pitfalls of empire–evident in the long history of imperialism from ancient times to modernity–most proponents of global bonding (*Bund*) stop short of endorsing the construction of a super-state which would accumulate or amass all the powers traditionally vested in individual states. Typically, articulations of global governance occupy a spectrum stretching from the traditional 'anarchy of states', through various forms of association and federation, all the way to global government. Most importantly, proponents of global bonding tend to be less concerned with formal governmental structures or with 'top-down' political control than with lateral interactions between societies and peoples, that is, with the fostering of a global 'civil society' (as a precondition of political governance).

IDEALIST AND REALIST PERSPECTIVES

Further, contemporary discussions of global governance tend to oscillate between normative or 'idealist' and empirical-descriptive or 'realist' accounts; that is, between accounts treating such governance as a yardstick (perhaps) guiding future developments, and accounts depicting (and perhaps endorsing) a prevailing state of affairs.

> ' In Toulmin's account, the expectation of global governance, or 'cosmopolis', has been the 'hidden agenda' of Western modernity'

Stephen Toulmin (in *Cosmopolis*) has advanced a strongly normative and future-oriented vision of global governance. In his account, the expectation of global governance, or 'cosmopolis', has been the secret longing or 'hidden agenda' of Western modernity. As we move into the third millennium, a reasonable 'horizon of expectation' (*Erwartungshorizont*) is the strengthening and steady unfolding of cosmopolitan institutions–provided we do not shrink back from this task in fearful 'trepidation' or out of nostalgia for the past. For Toulmin, the road ahead requires a normative sea-change, the development of a new moral vision and political practice:

> [The] overriding concern of administrators and politicans can no longer be to enhance the scope, power and glory of . . . centralized national institutions. . . Rather, we need to disperse authority and adapt it more discerningly and precisely: on the one hand, to the needs of local areas and communities, and, on the other, to wider transnational functions.

By contrast, Francis Fukuyama considers cosmopolis to have been basically achieved in our time: namely, through the triumphant ascent of Western 'liberal democracy' and the world-wide acceptance of liberal-capitalist market principles. In *The End of History and the Last Man*, he writes that the collapse of communism and other non-liberal or 'totalitarian' regimes has brought about a virtual 'end' of historical developments and aspirations in the traditional sense, ushering in an era of global governance under Western liberal auspices. Undaunted by critiques of capitalism pointing to a growing gap between rich and poor, North and South, Fukuyama argues that the prevailing economic (and political) world system is 'arguably free from fundamental inner contradictions' and hence self-perpetuating. In terms of social and political aspirations, our time is virtually the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution', demonstrated by the 'remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy' around the globe.

Fukuyama's celebration of Western-style liberal democracy (and neoliberal economics) does not meet the standards of ' cosmopolitan democracy' as formulated by David Held and others. (In, for example, *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order*.) For Held, democracy in the global arena entails a greater participation of peoples–especially the underprivileged masses–than exists today; democracy (both domestically and globally) has to be basically a 'bottom-up' enterprise transgressing the narrow limits of liberal-representative government endemic to Western countries. Democracy can only be sustained through agencies which 'form an element of and

yet cut across the territorial boundaries of the nation-state' (fashioned on the European model). Held – with Daniele Archibugi – argues that the term 'cosmopolitan' (in the phrase 'cosmopolitan democracy') indicates a political arrangement in which 'citizens, wherever they are located in the world, have a voice, input and political representation in international affairs, in parallel with and independently of their own governments'.

In contrast to the 'remarkable consensus' (under Western-liberal auspices) stressed by Fukuyama, more realistic observers detect a pervasive dissensus dividing the global community along ethnic, cultural, and religious lines. Thus, in his famous (or notorious) essay of 1993, Samuel Huntington depicts the end of the Cold War not as the gateway to global harmony but as the inauguration of an impending or imminent 'clash of civilizations.' This clash is the (predictable) outcome of a stark fissure in the global community: namely, that between the West as hegemonic world centre and non-Western societies pushed onto the periphery. Western civilization, he writes, is now 'at an extraordinary peak of power in relation to other civilizations; its superpower opponent has disappeared from the map'.

Huntington, whose concern is basically with the preservation and promotion of Western hegemonic interests, regards humankind's 'crookedness' as ineluctable. Edward Said, by contrast, takes it as a summons to moral and political struggle. In *Culture and Imperialism* he depicts the same global scenario as Huntington–but presents it as an indictment of global domination and inequity. As Said observes, imperial domination has not been abolished with the dismantling of the 'classical [European] empires'; on the contrary, the emergence of the United States as the last superpower suggests 'that a new set of force lines will structure the world'. Today we witness a global confrontation between development and underdevelopment, North and South, rich and poor. In the face of this global hegemony Said counsels a counter-movement on the part of non-hegemonic societies and peoples–though a movement which must stay clear of xenophobia or native fundamentalism.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The importance of cultural or counter-cultural resurgence and resistance is emphasized–perhaps even more eloquently–by voices emanating from non-hegemonic cultural settings. Speaking from an Asian-Confucian viewpoint, Tu Weiming (in *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity*) criticizes the lopsidedness in the relations between North and South (or West and East) in our contemporary world. He notes a steady 'taste transfer'–evident in 'the receptivity of East Asian youth to American popular culture and the susceptibility of the East Asian general public to American consumerism'; these trends validate complaints about cultural hegemony and Westernization. In Tu's account, modern Western political thought is 'so exclusively focused on the relationship between the individual and the state' that all other forms of human relatedness are 'relegated to the background'; above all, the notion of 'fraternity'–a functional equivalent of polis or public community–has 'received scant attention in modern Western economic, political, and social thought.' In this respect, Asian Confucian legacies, with their emphasis on social relatedness and mutual responsiveness/responsibility, can provide an antidote or needed corrective. However, reviving Confucian legacies cannot amount to endorsing 'fundamentalist representations of nativist ideas'; rather, the issue is how Asian intellectuals can be 'enriched and empowered by their own cultural roots in their critical response' to Western modernity–an enrichment which hopefully will be reciprocal.

> 'Falk perceives the hope of a global or cosmopolitan democracy in the activation of peoples' initiatives drawing on a variety of cultural and counter cultural resources'

These critical rejoinders to cultural hegemony are prompted by a desire to strengthen democracy both domestically and on the global level by bringing politics more closely into the reach of ordinary people. David Held also stresses the significance of cultural diversity for democratic global politics: 'distinctive national, ethnic, cultural and social identities are part of the very basis of people's sense of being-in-the-world', providing them with 'deeply rooted comfort and distinctive social locations for communities seeking a place "at home" on this earth'. To be sure, local identities cannot or should not be construed in an essentialist or 'nativist' sense, but, rather, as historically contingent meaning patterns open to multiple learning experiences–which points up the need for dialogue and mutual recognition.

Adding an agonal political edge to these considerations, Richard Falk perceives the hope of a global or cosmopolitan democracy in the activation of peoples' initiatives drawing on a variety of cultural and counter-cultural resources (see his essay in *Cosmopolitan Democracy*). In Falk's account, 'globalization-from-above', relying on hegemonic power, establishes a global normative network of rules–but one which is at odds with a genuine 'law of humanity' or 'law of peoples' (*ius gentium*). In his view, only transnational social forces and movements can provide the vehicle for such a law of humanity: that is, for a normative framework that is 'animated by humane sustainable development for all peoples, North and South, and seeks to structure such commitments by way of humane global governance'. This governance - which Falk calls 'globalization-from-below' - would protect 'the earth and its peoples', would be 'democratically constituted both in relation to participation and

accountability' and would also be 'responsive to the needs of the poorest 20 per cent and of the most vulnerable, e.g., indigenous peoples'.

GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

Falk's makes an important point: to reflect the diversity of cultures and peoples, democratic global governance needs to be built 'from the ground up' through lateral interactions and transnational or cross-cultural movements; in the language of traditional political philosophy, such governance has to be anchored in a global 'civil society'. For Falk this means, first, voluntary non-governmental agencies, such as Amnesty International and various regional watch groups, where the focus is on the protection of individual freedoms and aspirations; and, secondly, broader movements of peoples pursuing their emancipation from oppressive structures of (local or national) government.

Falk makes concrete recommendations designed to strengthen both cross-cultural cooperation and the viability of global governance. Some are structural or legal: for example, he argues that the composition and the functioning of both the Security Council and the General Assembly should be reformed so that both 'countries in the South' and 'transnational social forces' committed to human rights and democratization would be better represented in the United Nations. Others are more political and moral: he stresses the need to rein in global market operations and to accord higher priority to ecological concerns than is presently done.

Archibugi, similarly, makes detailed suggestions for the structural reform of global institutions (in *Cosmopolitan Democracy*). Following the example of the 'Campaign for a More Democratic United Nations' (the so-called CAMDUN conferences), he proposes the creation of a United Nations second assembly which would represent peoples rather than their governments: not only majority parties but also oppositional groups, national minorities, and new social movements. Some of Archibugi's proposals target the Security Council: for example, removal of its veto power, and expansion of its membership to include both more states and non-state or civil society institutions. With Held, he stresses the need to consolidate international judicial capacities–a point dramatically highlighted in our time by massive violations of human rights and the proliferation of war crimes and genocidal 'crimes against humanity'. The challenge of cosmopolitan democracy, he concludes, is not that of 'substituting one power with another', but of 'reducing the role of [top-down] power in the political process while increasing the influence' of democratic participation.

Of course, cosmopolitanism and global civil society cannot be advanced merely by institutional tinkering and structural reform. Global democracy can be increased only by sustained cross-cultural interactions and by reciprocal learning processes involving many dimensions of people's concrete or ordinary lives. Examples of such learning processes are inter-faith dialogues (exemplified by the Parliament of the World's Religions and numerous inter-faith groups and associations), cross-cultural exchange programmes involving teachers, students, and workers, and interactive social movements concerned with ecology, the lot of women, and indigenous peoples.

'reflective education is a key to humanization or the unfolding of 'personhood' - which, in turn, is key to the development of broader potentials'

Co-operation–both among Southern societies and between peoples North and South–does not arise instantly as a sudden boon; it requires cultivation through sustained learning, that is, through some form of cross-cultural education. As Elise Boulding writes in her pioneering *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World*, reflective education is a key to humanization or the unfolding of 'personhood'–which, in turn, is key to the development of broader potentials.

PERPETUAL PEACE

Kant elaborated his views on a possible 'league of nations' in his famous 'philosophical sketch' for 'perpetual peace' (1795). Though he noted the unwillingness of national governments to form a *civitas gentium* or global polis, Kant also stressed countervailing tendencies pursuing the global 'intent' by different means. 'The peoples of the earth have entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere.' Hence, the idea of a cosmopolitan civic code (*Weltbürgerrecht*) is 'not fantastic or overstrained'. More than two centuries have passed since Kant wrote these lines. The distance, however, is not only temporal, but political, cultural and linguistic. Contemporary advocates of 'cosmopolitan democracy' tend to favour a stronger version of cultural pluralism and thus welcome a greater degree of cultural diversity than seems compatible with Kantian republicanism. A case in point is the very notion of 'cosmopolis' or 'cosmopolitanism'. Can we be sure that different cultures share similar meanings of 'cosmos' and polis'? As Jacques Derrida recently noted (in *Le droit à la philosophie du point de vue cosmopolitique*), the task today is 'not to promote an abstractly global philosophy devoid of idiomatic embodiment, but, on the contrary, to immerse philosophy in a multiplicity of idioms, thereby promoting modes of argument which are neither untranslatable nor abstractly transparent with an aura of bland universality'.

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Town and Country

Harriet Evans *looks at what's included in - and excluded from - the descriptions of mothering in Chinese women's magazines*

Images of beautiful women are a prominent feature of the visual and narrative discourses accompanying the economic transformation of China's cities and urban areas. Indeed, images of erotic femininity are displayed as an emblem of the achievements of China's programme of transformation. The youth, beauty, health and prosperity of the fashionable woman of television advertisements and women's magazines denote the rewards that result from welcoming the competitive opportunities offered by the government's programme of economic reform. Inscribed in the fashionable woman's image are the consumer-driven social and cultural values that, in part at least, explain the success of China's market policies in transforming life-styles and expectations in the urban areas.

However, just as any presence invokes its absence, the beautiful woman also represents the exclusions and marginalizations reinforced by the same local and global processes which construct her. Her eternal youth and urban identification deny the possibility of success to those women–the vast majority of Chinese women–whose images are rarely displayed: elderly women, rural women, the young female migrants working sixteen hours a day in the factories of Shenzhen: those who have had the benefit neither of foreign travel nor of education and whose socio-economic position prevents them from gaining access to the consumerist pleasures of the cities. The urban beauty affirms the superiority of the urban/modern/educated over the rural/backward/ignorant through the total exclusion of all those who do not subscribe to her terms. She also stands for a global production of femininity which reinforces hierarchies of difference, between herself and her spectators, and between herself and the women denied access to her.

MOTHERS IN CONTEXT

A particularly prominent instance of the exclusions in popular representations of women occurs in descriptions of mothers and mothering. Expectations and practices of motherhood and mothering in China have changed profoundly in the past two decades; the dilemmas of mothering have been subject to changing definitions and expectations that have emerged as effects of decisions made by policy makers little interested in their subjective impact. Rural mothers have to respond to central reform policy in their domestic and personal lives in ways which are difficult to imagine from the distanced perspectives of cosomopolitan centres such as Beijing or London. Constrained by the single-child family policy (first implemented in 1979), and in socio-economic conditions sustaining the desire to have a son, mothers make decisions which have a direct impact on their physical and psychological health, their social and even political status, and on the legal status of their child. They have to decide how many children to have before giving up hope of producing a baby boy; whether to hide or declare the birth of a child; whether to adopt a child out as a means of evading penalties for above-quota births; and how to finance the fines demanded for parity births. Mothers may find themselves having to deny their daughters necessary healthcare when the domestic budget can only cover the needs of their sons. They may also have to withdraw girls from school when the economic exigencies of the household demand. In conditions of extreme poverty, mothers have sometimes had little choice but to abandon baby children (mostly girls); they have even committed infanticide.

images of erotic femininity are displayed as an emblem of the achievements of China s programme of transformation

In urban areas, the tribulations associated with motherhood have been quite different. In most large cities, as evidence shows, the single-child policy has been largely successful; but mothers have had to forgo their fertility preference (for two children) in order to conform to the policy. They have to bear the physical and psychological costs of reducing the size of the population, either through contraception, abortion, or sterilization. Childcare services have been increasingly privatized as the state has reduced its welfare responsibilities. Dependent largely on their own resources, parents not only have to shoulder the financial, material and psychological responsibilities of nurturing their single child.They also – and mothers in particular – are repeatedly enjoined to attend to the 'quality' (*suzhi*) of the single child: to satisfy her/his educational, cultural and material needs without spoiling her, or him.

Urban mothers also have to live with

the effects of dramatic and rapid change to the basic infrastructure of their lives. They have seen their homes destroyed, roads built through their former courtyards, and the rural suburbs in which they were brought up transformed into satellite towns. Their task as mothers has arguably been complicated by the widely discussed 'generation gap' that is a feature of contemporary urban society. Mothers of today's teenagers were brought up in a world entirely unacquainted with advertising, consumerism, fashion, international travel, and information technology. They had limited access to public discussions about gender relations and identities, despite the rhetoric of 'women holding up half the sky'. Their approach to motherhood, as the scholar Wang Zheng has recently put it, was that, like marriage and work, it was something a woman just did. Being a woman brought with it normative and naturalized expectations which, in the absence of any notion of gender as being subject to social and cultural construction, women by and large simply adhered to.

MAGAZINE NARRATIVES

Despite the extent and complexity of the pressures contemporary mothers face in their day-to-day lives, popular women's magazines in the past decade have devoted relatively little attention to issues of motherhood and mothering. (Articles on love and romance, or on divorce and marital problems, are more common.) From time to time, magazines feature autobiographical or biographical pieces written by sons, daughters, granddaughters, and so on. Many autobiographical observations about mothering are also in readers' letters, published to highlight a particular issue of editorial concern, or to contribute to readers' debates about specific matters, such as 'How to be a good wife' or 'What do today's children lack?'

Prominent in descriptions of the good mother is the theme of self-sacrifice. The writer Zhang Jie contributed a short biographical description of her mother as one of a series of articles published in *Jiating* (5, 1994: 7-8) to celebrate mothers' day in 1994. In somewhat nostalgic tones, she depicted an uncomplaining, long-suffering woman who, despite ill health and freezing conditions, helped her daughter by cleaning vegetables and rinsing rice. A mother's self-sacrifice featured prominently in a story about a 19-year-old son's success in finding a new husband for his widowed mother: 'My mother, though

only 30 years old, was so thin that her bones stuck out under her skin. She looked more like 45 years old. In order to save a bit of money to pay for my school books, she would get up in the middle of the night to make breakfast to sell at the stand she had at the gates of the hospital.' (*Hunyin yu Jiating*, 4, 1999: 50-51). Her self-sacrifice explains her son's commitment to ensuring her contentment. Another story entitled 'Mother for ever, son for ever' (*Jiating*, 1, 1994:15-16) paints a sentimental picture of a 70-year-old man's grief when his 90-year-old mother died. Though he is married and has children, his mother's self-sacrificing care for him had continued throughout his married life; every time he got up in the middle of the night to go on shift work, his mother would be there first, sitting with him as he ate and seeing him off at the door.

> 'Urban mothers have seen their homes destroyed, roads built through their former courtyards, and the rural suburbs in which they were brought up transformed into satellite towns'

While such descriptions invariably reinforce the construction of self-sacrifice as a naturalized and gendered attribute, many of them reveal a different purpose, associated with concerns about children's reciprocal responsibilities towards their parents. A recent article in *Zhongguo funü* (4, 2000: 35) focused on the issue of care of the elderly through the example of four siblings who had drawn up a contract stipulating their separate material and financial contributions to the livelihood of their mother. The contract was presented to the mother as a gift on her 60th birthday: 'She looked after us for so long that we have no choice but to give her comfort in her final years.' Another article approached the issue from a different angle. In the 1997 debate in *Zhongguo funü* on 'What do today's children lack?', an editorial quoted a letter in which a mother complained that her daughter took all her care and love for granted, not appreciating the sacrifices she, the mother, had made for her. The accompanying editorial sympathized with the mother, but also suggested that a mother's responsibility lay in teaching her children to respond to parental self-sacrifice with love, respect, and understanding. 'Children should be taught to say "thank you"', intoned the author of another article (*Zhongguo funü*, 4, 2000: 15). 'Mothers take their child to MacDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken, even though they hate the food themselves; they give up their bus seat to their child even though they are tired and laden down with shopping; they do all the housework so that the child can study.' The child, however, does not appreciate this parental care. 'The problem is in the child, [but] the root of the problem lies in the parent.'

It is a short step from these views to others that castigate mothers for their failure as moral educators of their children. Indeed, the argument that parents' inadequacies are responsible for the creation of problematic or low-achieving children is given wide press coverage. Excessive maternal love, for example, may nourish and protect a child's misbehaviour, widely associated with the 'little emperor' syndrome. 'There are many reasons why children go astray, including their own weaknesses. But reality tells us that family education is enormously important in the development of a child. When a child is badly influenced, or is psychologically damaged, this invariably begins with their parents' (*Zhongguo funü* 2, 1993: 30-31). So while 'mother-love' (*mu'ai*) is a natural and indispensable aspect of a mother's responses to her children, 'too much love becomes a burden and an irritation to a child' (*Hunyin yu Jiating*, 10, 1998: 26-27).

URBAN EXCLUSIVITY

These examples indicate the general tenor of representations of mothers and mothering in popular women's journals. First,

while the specific theme might vary, discussions address urban concerns and perspectives. Anxieties about children's relationships with peers and parents are expressed in contexts of increasing wealth and consumer capacity, the main references to which are urban phenomena such as MacDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Parents' capacity to meet the material demands of their children's welfare and education is a dominant assumption in many of these articles. A further indication of the urban bias of these representations is the self-description of worried parents as members of China's 'lost generation': denied the opportunity for professional fulfilment in the Maoist years, it has transferred its hopes on to its children.

Second, these discussions correspond with the government's principal concerns about the urban family, social security and social stability: the responsibilities of the single-child generation for the material support of their elderly parents, parental responsibility for the moral welfare of their children, practices promoting family stability, and so on. When employment can longer be guaranteed, when competition for stable work is fierce, and when unemployment benefits are either inadequate or non-existent, an emphasis on parents' responsibility for their children's upbringing and education can be read as a transference of the government's concerns about future stability.

RURAL ABSENCE

Of course, all of these concerns correspond to day-to-day lived experiences; public discussion about them is both important and necessary. However, from the identification of topic to its mode of description, such discussion about mothers can do little more than refer to the experiences and needs of a small minority of women. Even within an urban context, the range of issues that are aired in these journals is extremely limited. The needs of the growing numbers of single mothers are not addressed any more than are those of the working class mother who does not have the resources to buy her child sophisticated skills and education. However, it is most obviously the rural mother who is excluded from these descriptions. How are we to read her absence?

One immediate and plausible answer to this question would refer to editors' commercially-driven interests to attract a largely urban readership. However, there are other possible answers. In the dominant discourse of sexuality in contemporary China, the young rural woman functions as a metaphor for all that is 'backward', uneducated, uncivilized and often immoral. Her image functions almost as the unwanted alter-ego of the beautiful young urbanite. Simultaneously, it functions as a symbolic reminder of all that the urban-oriented project of market reform seeks to transform, even destroy. Her absence from discussions about mothers thus emerges as an exclusion of the practices and attitudes which disturb the principles of economic reform.

> 'In the dominant discourse of sexuality in contemporary China, the young rural woman functions as a metaphor for all that is 'backward', uneducated, uncivilized and often immoral'

Just as the image of the urban beauty can be interpreted as affirmation of the consumer interests of reform policy, the image of the mother described in the pages of women's magazines appears as a kind of reminder of the dominant tendencies of government concerns about the family and child upbringing. Magazine discussions about the tasks of motherhood may touch on a series of important and difficult issues; they are often treasure-houses of insights into problems that ordinary women face in their daily lives. However, the voices participating in these discussions are not unmediated. Rather, they are polished and packaged to highlight concerns defined by the editorial, and are moulded to conform to editorial requirements of language, style and register, and content. In the process, potentially diverse narratives and opinions are grouped into a relatively narrow bunch of themes. Given the extent and diversity of experiences and practices of motherhood in China, this reinforces the narrative exclusions at work.

Urban disdain of the rural in China is displayed in many practices and discourses, including academic writing in the social sciences. If we acknowledge the power of discourses to reinforce as well as challenge hegemonic meanings, the erasure of the rural woman from popular descriptions of mothers and mothering is yet another mode of reinforcing gender and social hierarchies in contemporary China. It is a denial of her difference, a denial of her claims to equal recognition as a person, defined in cultural terms with which she identifies. Alongside the evidence of the particular abuses of basic rights that so many rural women have suffered–and continue to suffer–in China's poor rural areas, this exclusion is yet another kind of violence–a discursive violence as Spivak has put it–denying rural women the possibility of a public voice and public recognition.

Harriet Evans is coordinator of the MA and MPhil/PhD programmes in Contemporary Chinese Cultural Studies at CSD. *This is an edited amalgamation of two papers, the first given in June 2000 at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Women, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, the second in October 2000, in Beijing, to the conference on Globalization and the Future of Chinese Culture.*

Review

American Beauties

Jim Melly *on two books which inadvertently cast an eye over how America sees itself today*

Those Damn Yankees: The Secret Life of America's Greatest Franchise

Dean Chadwin (Verso 2000)

No-One Left To Lie To: The Values of the Worst Family

Christopher Hitchens (Verso 2000)

Dean Chadwin is a Yankees fan, though you wouldn't know it to read this book. His book reflects sports fans' complicated relationships with their clubs of choice - even with their sports of choice - which are tied up with location, identity, territory, and history. Sports supporters treat their clubs as if it were family; and, as ever, it's okay to slag off one's own family, but if you have something to say about my mother I'll knock your block off.

To a large extent, baseball remains America's national sport. The way baseball has changed over the past 100 years reflects how America has seen itself, and baseball has played a part in forging American national identity. In deconstructing the myth of the Yankees - and through this, the myths of baseball - Chadwin is deconstructing the myth of American identity. (Though none of this is particularly new - the dirt has been dished on baseball's sordid and occasionally shameful past before.)

> 'Unless you really know and love something, you can't rip the heart out of it'

As Chadwin documents in his book, the Yankees are belligerent. The Yankees can be obnoxious (especially to their fans). They are conceited and they're arrogant. But most of all, the Yankees are winners. The Yankees have won 26 World Series out of a possible 91. At present they have some of the biggest stars in the game and the highest wage-bill of all the major league baseball teams. Despite all this, they barely made it to the 2000 World Series, and their highly paid stars played like donkeys throughout it. Yet they still managed to beat the other New York team, the Mets, by 4-1. Which means that they have won four out of the last five World Series. And though their team is considered to be past it, and a clear-out is overdue, there are few people who would bet against them being in the World Series again next year. Because that's what winners do.

Chadwin's book is a great work of sports writing and of sociology. He writes as an insider - he is American, he lives in New York, and most of all he supports the Yankees. Unless you really know and love something, you can't rip the heart out of it.

Christopher Hitchens, on the other hand, is not an insider. His book on the Clintons highlights what can only be described as the shenanigans of political life in the American South. The impression one is left with is of a family who will do anything to get what they want. And what the Clintons want, according to Hitchens, is power, and the stuff that comes with power - sex, money, and more sex (well, Bill does at least). Hitchens is indignant and enraged because, though they knew at least of Bill Clinton's sexual history, and despite the mutterings about financial irregularities, Americans re-elected Clinton in 1996, and his popularity has remained high. There is a simple truth here: Americans like Bill Clinton. Except, of course, for those who don't like him - basically the fag-end of the Reagan Republicans and Christopher Hitchens - and they hate him. A lot. And they cannot understand why everyone doesn't hate Clinton as much as they do. In fact, what they hate most is the Clintons' ability to get away with it.

It seems odd that someone as politically astute as Hitchens should be surprised or appalled at the behaviour of politicians: many people already know that when it comes to the political class one should believe little and expect less; one is then rarely disappointed. It is as if Hitchens put his faith in a standard bearer who actually proved to be as fallible as the rest of us: an all too common story on the Left. But it can't be said that anyone expected much from Clinton. These days, all we can expect from politicians is that they aren't malicious - if they manage to improve the general lot of most of the people most of the time it is considered a bonus. (This is what capitalist liberal democracy has reduced us to.) This is a large part of why Clinton remained popular throughout his period in office. But there is another reason.

The shameful execution of Rickey Ray Rector in 1992 aside, most of Bill Clinton's scandals have involved his apparent inability to keep his trousers done up for any substantial length of time. The financial allegations against him are largely unproven. And though Hitchens asserts that there may be 'a rapist in the Whitehouse', the evidence for this is sketchy and ignores the aphrodisiac powers of Power. Bill Clinton's popularity amongst women remains high, and most American men (when questioned by this reviewer in a non-scientific poll, conducted in New Jersey and New York, the methodology of which included substantial alcohol consumption) said words to the effect of 'good luck to him'. The simple fact is, Americans didn't care what Bill Clinton was doing to his interns as long as he wasn't doing it to them.

> 'The simple fact is, Americans didn't care what Bill Clinton was doing to his interns as long as he wasn't doing it to them'

So what do these books tell us about America? That, like the Yankees, America wants to see itself as a state with a glorious past, as a survivor, and more: as a winner. And America - or at least American men - likes to see itself reflected in the White House, with a good ol' boy in the Oval Office who is too busy doing things to his junior staff to actually do anything to the country. Americans in the year 2000 want to be left alone without having to cope with malicious government. And they like to win. But whatever you do, don't slag off their ball-clubs.

Jim Melly is a PhD candidate at CSD.

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For specific enquiries contact Dr Harriet Evans, CSD, 100 Park Village East, London NW1 3SR, UK. Tel: +44 020 7468 2254/7911 5138; fax: 7911 5164;email: evansh@westminster.ac.uk

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Chinese Poster Collection at CSD

C S D houses the University of Westminster s unique Chinese Poster Collection: over 600 posters dating from the 1960s to the early 1980s (the majority Maoist propaganda posters from the Cultural Revolution) . A selction of posters is reprinted on this page, page 19, and on pages 14-16.

The collection will be visible on-line by Summer 2001 (http://home.wmin.ac.uk/china/chinaindex.htm).

The Chinese Poster Project - linked to the CSD M A in Contemporary Chinese Cultural Studies (see box on this page) is developing the collection as a resource for the study of modern Chinese history and modern Chinese visual culture.

A selection of posters will be on exhibition in Budapest in 2001.

CSD TRUST FUND

In support of its long-term development plan plans, the Centre for the Study of Democracy has established an interest-earning known fund as the CSD Trust Fund.

The Fund aims, broadly, to supplement CSD's current revenue base (drawn from taught Masters' courses, research student fees, government research grants, and individual research contract sources) and so to provide for the things that we urgently want to do. CSD needs additional funds to encourage staff development and to support our publications, seminars, and conferences; and to enable us to appoint additional teaching, research, administrative and library staff. Support is also needed to create an enlarged community of resident scholars and postgraduate students; and to publicize better the work and good reputation of CSD on a European and global basis.

The establishment of the CSD Trust Fund, and the launching of an appeal to raise an endowment to support these various appointments and activities, was initially supported by a modest grant from the University. The CSD Trust Fund operates strictly under the auspices of the University of Westminster Prizes and Scholarships Fund, to whose Trustees it is directly accountable. Decisions about fund-raising and disbursements are initially formulated by a CSD Trust Fund Working Group, which includes several CSD staff, senior University representatives, well-placed patrons of the appeal, and a representative of the CSD Council of Advisers. In principle, the functions and activities of the CSD Trust Fund are kept quite separate from the governing institutions of the Centre, including its commitments to the wider University structures.

Requests for further details and offers of financial support should be directed to: Dr Richard Whitman, Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster 100 Park Village East, London NW1 3SR, United Kingdom.

Staff News

Barry Buzan has been appointed to the ALSISS (Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences) Commission on the Social Sciences.

Harriet Evans, recently appointed to the Council of the British Association of Chinese Studies, will give a paper at a conference at the Open Society Archives in Budapest on 10 February 2001 to launch an exhibition of posters of China's Cultural revolution. (See p. 18 for more details about the CSD Chinese poster collection, on which the exhibition is based.) She is the co-editor (with Stephanie Donald) of a special issue of *New Formations* (1/2000), entitled Culture/China.

Simon Joss is part of an international team of policy analysts and insurance specialists participating in the recently established 'Interest' project. Funded by the European Commission and coordinated by Professor Jim Skea of the Policy Studies Institute, this project will look at how the private and public sectors can learn from one another about how to deal with scientific-technological risks.

Chantal Mouffe is giving the key note address to a conference on 'Civil Society in the Age of Globalization' at Tokyo University in January 2001. In April she will address the federal parliament of the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, as well as lecturing at the universities of Curitiba, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro and Belem do Para, on the paradoxes of liberal democracy.

CSD

The Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD) is the postgraduate and post-doctoral research centre of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster. Well known for its inter-disciplinary work, CSD is led by a team of internationally recognized scholars whose teaching and research concentrate on the interplay of states, cultures and civil societies. CSD also supports research into all aspects of the past, present and future of democracy, in such diverse areas as political theory and philosophy, international relations and law, European Union social policy, gender and politics, mass media and communications, and the politics and culture of China, Europe, the United States, and Muslim societies. CSD is located in the School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (SBS) on the Regent Campus, and works alongside the influential Policy Studies Institute. It hosts seminars, public lectures and symposia in its efforts to foster greater awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of democracy in the public and private spheres at local, regional, national, and international levels. It offers a number of MAs on a one-year full-time, two-year part-time, basis (see back page for details). CSD's publications include a series of working papers entitled *CSD Perspectives* and this bulletin. *CSD Bulletin* aims to inform other university departments and public organizations, and our colleagues and undergraduates at the University of Westminster, of CSD's research activities. The *Bulletin* comprises reports of 'work in progress' of our research students and staff and contributions from visiting researchers and speakers. Comments on the content of this *Bulletin*, or requests to receive it, should be directed to The Editor, *CSD Bulletin*, 100 Park Village East, London NW1 3SR. As with all CSD publications and events, the opinions expressed in these pages do not necessarily represent those held generally or officially in CSD or the University of Westminster.

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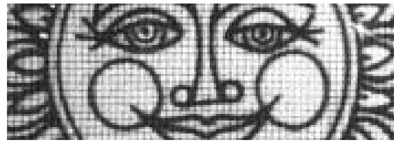

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For details about the MA in Contemporary Cultural Chinese Studies, see page 18.

For specific enquiries about these MA programmes contact:

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