

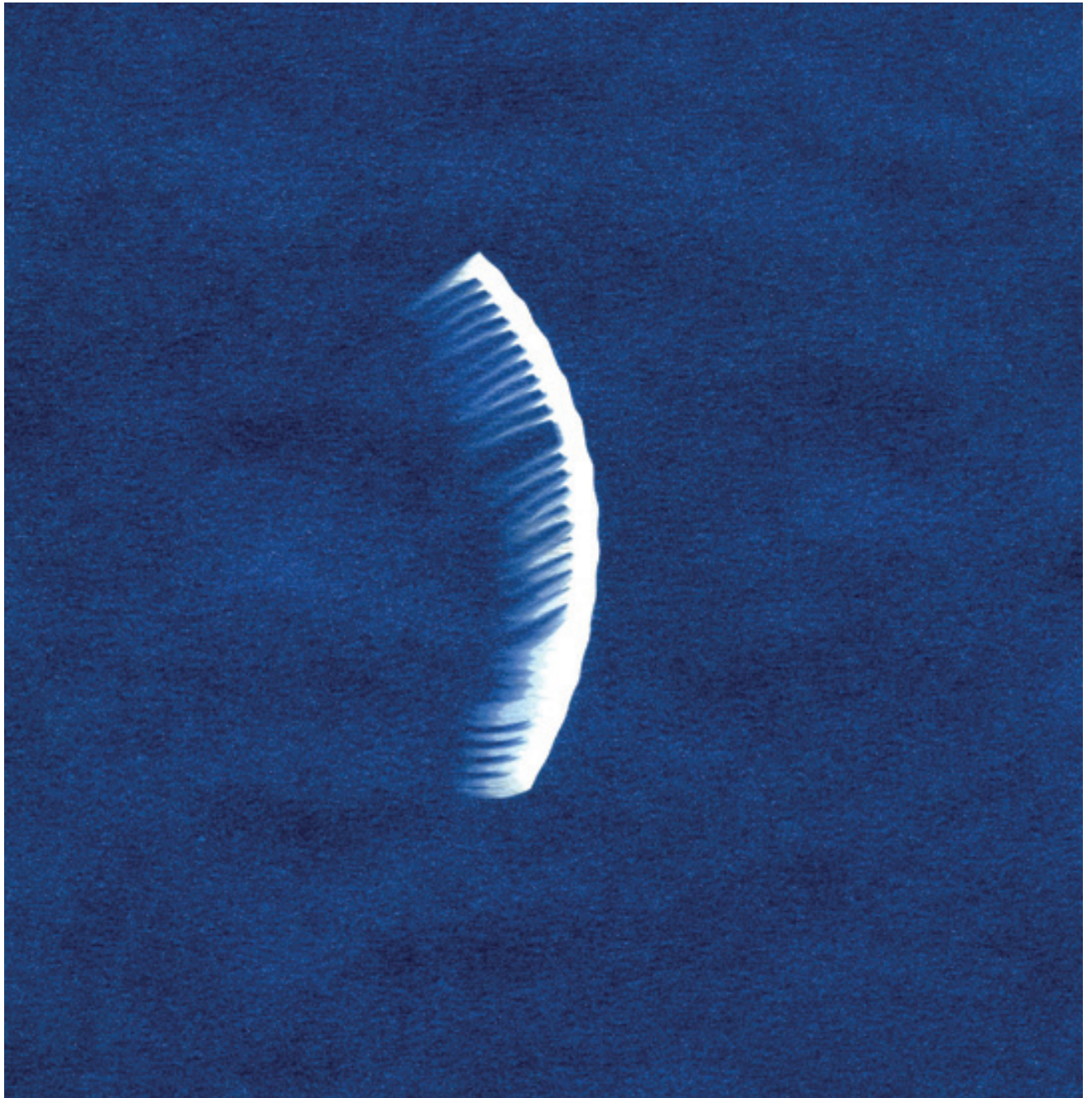
CounterPunch

KILLING DETROIT BY DARWIN BOND GRAHAM

AN AMERICAN AMAZON BY SUSANNA B. HECHT

FOCUSING ON HIROSHIMA: AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIN O'HARA SLAVICK BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

HUMAN RIGHTS AND COPY WRONGS BY LEE BALLINGER



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**Hair Comb, from Hiroshima,
Cyanotype. By elin o'Hara slavick.**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR4

ARTICLES

Killing Detroit

BY DARWIN BOND-GRAHAM 10

An American Amazon

BY SUSANNA B. HECHT 13

Focusing on Hiroshima: A Conversation with elin o'Hara slavick

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR..... 21

CULTURE & REVIEWS

Human Rights and Copy Wrongs

BY LEE BALLINGER..... 25

COLUMNS

Roaming Charges 5

Empire of the Senseless

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

Obama is as culpable as he is capable.
But who will hold him accountable?

Diamonds and Rust. 6

Gramsci in the Bronx

BY JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

The challenge of optimism without
illusion.

Empire Burlesque 7

Pious Virtuosos of Violence

BY CHRIS FLOYD

American hypocrisies on chemical
weapons and Syria.

Grasping at Straws 8

Obama's Shock Doctrine

BY MIKE WHITNEY

Working people continue to lose
ground.

Daydream Nation. 9

War Chests

BY KRISTIN KOLB

Femen and the new Amazons.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CounterPunch Evokes

Brilliant, rage no, grief yes, reading your latest post made me cry. Thank you Jeffrey.

John, Australia

Prozac, Please

Ms. Loewenstein's essay on Syria in the last issue was very heady stuff. I've read it twice now and am still absorbing the implications. We need more of this kind of writing and less of St. Clair and Floyd's monthly offerings of doom-and-gloom. Someone give those boys Prozac. There's got to be a way out of this mess. Writers like Loewenstein will help us find the way

*Candace Smithson
Houston, Texas*

Best of the Left

I think it is great that JoAnn Wypijewski is writing for CounterPunch. My hope is that she will continue to do so. I hope that Christopher Ketcham will come back. Wypijewski and Ketcham are two outstanding journalists – the best!

Ted Bresnahan

Cockburnian Defense

Hello John Walsh, I have been a strong supporter of CounterPunch for quite a few years and an unabashed admirer of the late, truly great Alexander Cockburn.

This message is just to thank you very much for defending Alex's

reputation in this weekend's CounterPunch online. I agree with all the points you make in the article.

One of Alex's most admirable traits as a journalist was his scepticism about all orthodoxies and received opinions, including those of much of the so-called Left and yet he was in every way a very principled person and journalist.

I find it very hard to understand why the almost religious belief in catastrophic anthropogenic global warming is considered to be a left position at all. (The only clue I have is that what is considered to be the Western Left has sold out most of its former positions). Here in Australia the tone of the CAGW supporters has become hysterical, likening sceptics (of which I am one) to Holocaust Deniers and Pedophiles!

While I believe that that science is always carried out in particular social, political and economic contexts, & while scientists have a range of political views like everyone else, I don't believe scientific observations and evidence can be reduced to "right wing" or "left wing". Many eminent scientists have themselves made the point that science is in some sense always provisional as theory is based on the latest evidence/observations. There is of course bad science and good science. The CAGW supporters are also way too trusting of com-

puter modelling as of course is the IPCC itself.

*Yours sincerely,
Christine Maher
Australia*

A Sane Voice

Jeffrey,
Your voice is one of the clearest I've found. Consistently.

Thank you for your efforts and perspective.

Your writing is a tribute to the best humanity has to offer.

*Norman Trabulsky Jr.
Mangrove Cay, Andros,
Bahamas*

Grade A

Dear CounterPunch,
I visit your website almost every day. You have the best writers and provide great information. I especially like Linh Dinh, but can't find his books. Thank you for your work.

Mark, Washington State

Viva Olafur!

Your newsletter counter-punch is the BEST OF THE BEST. I like it even better than ZMAG which I love enormously. I am so impressed your ability to find not only original political thinkers but also musicians like Olafur Arnalds and the many books you profile, it's truly inspiring to see this web based bastion of progressive thought. As I try to help GRITtv move in a similar direction

I may just reach out for words of wisdom or lessons learned, as I can never learn too much about this digital world of content distribution.

Congrats on having such a great publication. Been reading it for years! I also love that you had an Olafur Arnalds song in your last email, also a real winner.

Phyllis

Kudos to Loewenstein

Jennifer Loewenstein's essay on Syria was as informative as it was timely. This is the kind of deep reporting that we desperately need more. Few magazines these days take the time and space to explore the historical context which can make a kind of sense out of the current crisis. Kudos to Loewenstein and CounterPunch!

*Angela Langström
Stockholm, Sweden*

We'll Miss You Saul

So sorry to hear about Saul. Reading Jeffrey's "Authentic Landau," I could see him and hear him, his earthiness, his humor, his caring and gusto. Saul had a big heart. I will miss him, the twinkle in his eye, and his particular brand of wry and serious humor.

*Barbara LaMorticella
Portland, Oregon*

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ROAMING CHARGES

Empire of the Senseless

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

For the sake of argument, let's assume the following to be true: Barack Obama is not a stooge, a cipher, or a puppet. He is not incompetent, indecisive, or deranged. He is, in fact, intelligent, purposeful, and rational. Let us further assume that Obama is sincere in his actions, if not always his rhetoric, and that his actions, from the persecution of whistleblowers to the assassination of American citizens, are premeditated, intentional and taken without ambivalence.

What do we make of this? On the surface, it means that Obama is as culpable as he is capable. His icy certitude has always been his most grating affectation. Yet there is no one to hold him accountable for his crimes against the Constitution, high and low, not even the Visigoths of the House. Despite the daily hysterics fulminating from the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal, Obama is the choice of the elites, the man they want at the helm at this fraught moment for global capitalism. It's his competence that makes him so dangerous.

Obama is the executive manager of what the British punk band the Mekons called the "Empire of the Senseless". By this, I don't mean an empire that is inchoate, but a government that doesn't sense, that doesn't feel, that is immune to the conditions and desires of the governed.

So, in the face of this reality, we confront, once more, Lenin's piercing question: what is to be done? This is not a metaphysical exercise any more, but an existential and practical one of the most extreme urgency. How do we respond to an ossified state that serves abstract interests yet remains chillingly indifferent to human suffering? Moreover, where do we turn when the institutions that once served as forces

of social change are now largely kaput.

The politics of lesser evilism remains a crippling *idée fixe* for most of the Left, despite the carnage strewn across the landscape by the politicians they have enabled over the last two decades: from the Clintons to John Kerry and Obama. The Democratic Party itself has become a parody of a political enterprise, a corporate-financed ghost ship for the gullible, the deluded and the parasitical. For all practical purposes the party has been superseded as a functional entity by pseudo-interest groups like MoveOn and its new house organ, MSNBC, which provide daily distractions from and rationalizations for each new Obama transgression.

To a great measure, the responsibility for the fatal ease with which Obama has been able to implement his draconian policies, from domestic spying to drone strikes, must be borne by the timid response of the political left, who have serially denied what they knew to be Obama's true agenda, an agenda of neoliberal austerity at home and imperial aggression abroad – an agenda that was incubating from the moment the young senator picked Joe Lieberman to be his ideological mentor.

Predictably, the more they indulge Obama, the more he tends to ignore their existence. For most of us, the economy is still crashing. A recent analysis by economists Emmanuel Saez and Thomas Piketty, revealed that 95 percent of the economic gains since the recession began have been captured by the top one percent. This was not an accidental outcome. Obama's economic plan was geared to generate precisely this result. But no one wants to talk about it on the Left.

Witness the president's rare conclave with the Congressional Black Caucus. With black poverty and unemploy-

ment rates at startling highs, Obama swatted away meek queries about the savage toll his economic policies have inflicted and pressed the delegation to publicly cheerlead for his scheme to shower Syria with cruise missiles. The CBC members sat mutely, soaking in Obama's humiliating lecture, while black America remains under a state of economic siege.

This brazen act was soon followed by Obama's announcement that he had picked Jeffrey Zients to head the National Economic Council. Who is Zients you ask? Well, he was a top executive at Mitt Romney's Bain Capital, plotting takeovers, mass firings, raids on pensions and de-unionization of factories. He did so well at this grim job that his net worth now tops \$100 million. One might view this appointment as an act of casual sadism, rubbing salt in the wounds of progressives. But the Left is so moribund, so deeply immured in a political coma that the insult didn't even prompt the slightest protest, not even a vestigial yelp for old time's sake.

Liberals seem to have finally come to terms with their own vacuity.

What about the rest of us? What do we do? Here we must turn to the heroic revelations of Edward Snowden, which denuded the government's aspirations toward a kind of roving omniscience, probing and recording the most intimate beliefs and intentions of its citizens. After the initial tingle of paranoia fades, we might be able to view this as a perversely liberating condition. What a relief! We no longer have to hide our discontent, our efforts to make sense of the senseless. We are free to become the sovereigns of our own actions without fear of disclosure.

And so we remain, nearly all of us, left and right, clinging stubbornly to the tiny freedoms that remain: to object, to denounce and to resist, until a real oppositional force emerges. Or SEAL Team Six team shows up at the back door. **CP**



DIAMONDS AND RUST

Gramsci in the Bronx

BY JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

September foists its monuments on New Yorkers, and each one signals defeat. There is no humility in light-beam ghosts trying to rival the moon; no grace in the surveillance systems and mawkish hordes at the 9/11 Memorial; no proportion in the annual pageant of grief for 2,753 souls out of the multitudes on the ledger of global excess death. The oafish skyscrapers rising from the ashes of the Twin Towers serve neither art nor imagination nor community, only real estate – though even in that enterprise their desirability to future tenants seems dubious. Destination, Ground Zero.

This September 11, 15-year-old Brittney Cofresi breached the rules of the televised sobfest. “We miss you very much,” she said of her dead uncle, Salvatore Papasso. “And President Obama, please do not bring us to another war.”

The next day’s *New York Post* cried, “How Dare She!” Cofresi’s “anti-war harangue” had injected politics into an occasion that had no place for it. The *Daily News* disagreed, blaring, “No More War”. Tabloid dissonance was all that passed for public debate around an event that, in the real months of calamity, had made New York a sprawling agora where conversations were interrupted, joined; where public places buzzed with discussion, commiseration, argument, gossip, thought; where knowledge extended a hand to feeling because there was no alternative, and everyone lucky/unlucky to be here had an inkling that the segregation, provincialism and social loneliness of our time could begin to crack.

It was left to a different kind of monument, far from Lower Manhattan, to evoke that lost spirit. The Gramsci Monument, an artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn erected in cooperation

with residents of the Forest Houses in the South Bronx, had no particular relationship to 9/11. It had none, either, to Occupy Wall Street, the shock of another September whose resistance to alienated life it also recalled.

Antonio Gramsci has no particular relationship with the Bronx. The Italian revolutionary writer’s artifacts – notebooks, slippers, wallet, a set of wooden utensils used in Mussolini’s prison, 1927-37 – were the least notable elements of this “precarious monument”, but his presence imbued it. The encounter was key.

So, imagine... You are on a ramp to a platform of wooden pallets, plywood and two-by-fours built by a paid crew of public housing residents. “It could have been better,” shrugs Louis Soto, a retired carpenter living in Forest Houses, “but they did it. It’s ok; it’s temporary.” Some call it a treehouse because it wraps around sycamores and elms, one, near the children’s art workshop, shading the Antonio Lounge, where meetings, lectures, open mics, poetry readings, performances or basketball one-on-ones occur. Signs above the hoops say “Love” and “Politics.” People liken the structure to a ship, or the ark. The housing project’s brick towers girdle this green and pleasant space like ancient walls. A spray-painted sheet hangs from one: “Cada Humano Es Un Intellectual.”

You may not have been to a housing project before. The residents may not have seen your neighborhood or country. Black and Puerto Rican, mainly, they may not yet adequately see each other. At the Gramsci Bar, Myrna Alvarez sells breakfast, hot dogs, burgers, the day’s dinner plate. “I was like a little shell”, she says. “I was shy, kind of scared to go out. But when I came here I felt that my little shell that

was so closed just started to open into something beautiful. I blossomed.” Nearby hangs a Gramsci Monument Newspaper with Martin Luther King c.1963 on the cover. Elsewhere hang others, “Please don’t shoot”, with Trayvon Martin. You skim an essay the paper ran by Nadia Urbinati on subordination and hegemony: “The peasant, wrote Gramsci in 1920, feels ‘his powerlessness, his solitude, his desperate condition, and becomes a brigante, not a revolutionary.” On Gramsci Radio, “the People’s Radio”, 91.9, BallOut is rapping, “I don’t trust these hoes; I just fuck em, then I dump em.”

You cross a wooden bridge to the shanties housing the microradio, the paper, the library/archive, the internet corner. For all the hum, there is not too much for a visitor to do, so you talk to people. The Tenants Association president, Erik Farmer, identifies with Gramsci’s physical trials and compares him with Malcolm X. “It’s bad times right now”, but he is optimistic. The radio music has improved. “It’s still not salsa,” someone says.

Around 5 you hear “Thank you, DJ Baby Dee,” in Germanic English as Marcus Steinweg begins his daily lecture. It’s not his best. “He talk about love as if it’s only in his head,” a resident says afterward. She has heard him for 72 days, drawn by solidarity and a hope for more. Tomorrow they’ll all begin again. The mostly white visitors drift off.

You drift off, into the Bronx twilight, elated by the possibilities in social thought and feeling. A corner preacher cries Jesus Saves.

“We are thrown into this world with no exit,” you remember Steinweg saying as the subway hurtles south. “We have to deal with it,” without illusion, or disillusionment. **CP**



EMPIRE BURLESQUE

Pious Virtuosos of Violence

BY CHRIS FLOYD

As we all know, the use of chemical weapons is the most heinous crime that can be committed by a brutal, aggressive government: a brazen act of state terror, an offense against all humanity. Those who perpetrate such actions put themselves beyond the pale; indeed, they rank themselves with Hitler himself, as a succession of America's highest officials has pointed out in recent weeks.

And that's why the details of the infamous chemical attack in the Middle East resonate with stark moral horror. Especially chilling are the reports of some of the soldiers who actually took part in the chemical attacks, coming forward to offer evidence after the regime they served denied its obvious crime. As one regime soldier noted, the chemical weapon involved in the attack "burns bodies; it melts the flesh all the way down to the bone. I saw the burned bodies of women and children. Anyone within a radius of 150 meters is done for."

A document produced by the regime's own military said the chemical weapon "proved to be an effective and versatile munition. We used it for screening missions and as a potent psychological weapon against the insurgents ... We [were] using [chemical weapons] to flush them out and high explosives to take them out." Another soldier involved in these chemical weapons attacks said: "There is no way you can use [it] without forming a deadly chemical cloud that kills everything within a tenth of a mile in all directions from where it hits. Obviously, the effect of such deadly clouds weren't just psychological in nature."

But of course, chemical weapons were only part of this attack on the rebel position – an attack absolutely replete with war crimes violations.

Before assaulting the civilian quadrants with a barrage of chemical weapons, the regime cut off the city's water and power supplies and food deliveries. One of the first moves in the attack was the destruction of medical centers; indeed, 20 doctors were killed, along with their patients – innocent women and children – in a savage blitz before the chemical weapons were unleashed. But why would even a regime full of rogue barbarians attack a hospital? It's simple, one of the regime's "information warfare specialists" told the *New York Times*: hospitals can be used as "propaganda centers" by rebels trying to stir up sympathy for their cause.

Meanwhile, the BBC managed to penetrate the rebel-held areas and report on the results of the combined attack of chemical and conventional weapons:

There are more and more dead bodies on the street, and the stench is unbearable ... There are dead women and children lying on the streets. People are getting weaker from hunger. Many are dying from their injuries because there is no medical help left in the city whatsoever. Some families have started burying their dead in their gardens.

By the end of the attack, vast areas lay in ruins. More than 36,000 homes were destroyed, along with 60 schools and 65 mosques and religious centers. Medical workers estimated the civilian death count at between 4,000 and 6,000, which, the *Guardian* noted, was "a proportionally higher death rate than in Coventry and London during the Blitz."

As both President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have said so eloquently, those responsible for such a crime must be punished. To

look away from such an atrocity, to fail to hold those responsible to account would be, as these eminent statesmen tell us, a crime in itself, tantamount to ignoring the Holocaust or the massacres in Rwanda ...

But of course the crimes enumerated above did not take place in Syria in August of 2013. They were part of America's Guernica-like destruction of the Iraqi city of Fallujah in 2004: one of the most egregious – and most sustained – war crimes since the Second World War. The widespread use of chemical weapons in the decimation of Fallujah – including the flesh-eating horror of white phosphorous, the future-maiming deployment of depleted uranium and other chemicals, which have led to an epidemic of birth defects in the region – is well-documented and, after years of outright lies and evasions, now cheerfully admitted by the US government. Using these chemical weapons – along with good old-fashioned mass-murdering conventional munitions just like mother used to make – the US government slaughtered thousands upon thousands of innocent people in its berserker outburst against Fallujah.

It goes without saying that the "international community" did not rise up in righteous indignation at this use of chemical weapons to slaughter far more civilians than even the Obama Administration's wild exaggerations are claiming in Syria. It goes without saying that the drone-bombing Peace Laureate and his lantern-jawed patrician at Foggy Bottom have signally to criticize – much less prosecute! – the perpetrators of the Fallujah war crime, or make the slightest change in the system of military aggression that produced it. Instead they have expanded and entrenched this system at every turn, extending it far beyond the wildest dreams of Bush and Cheney.

Whatever his manifest crimes (and alleged exacerbations), Bashar al-Assad will remain a hapless piker next to these pious virtuosos of mass-murdering violence. **CP**



GRASPING AT STRAWS

Obama's Shock Doctrine

BY MIKE WHITNEY

September is turning into another rough month for working people. With unemployment stuck above 7 percent, wages and salaries droopier than ever, consumer spending slowing to a crawl, unemployment benefits vanishing faster than jobs are being created, new home sales and mortgage applications cratering from the surge in rates, and Fed chairman Ben Bernanke planning to scale-back his asset purchases (QE) by sometime mid-month; September could be a real washout.

The problem is that the vast majority of US households are still digging out from the Crash of '08 when housing prices plunged by more than 30 percent wiping out trillions in equity that's never been recouped. The magnitude of the losses are staggering, in fact, according to a report from the St. Louis Fed, US households lost an estimated \$16 trillion in the recession but have only recaptured 45 percent of that amount.

As bad as that sounds, the losses are far worse than the Fed's figures suggest, mainly because the Fed's calculations include the profits that investors have made on soaring stock prices since the bust. But all the gains have gone to just a handful of people who play the stock market. The only gains ordinary working people have seen, are from the higher prices on their homes which have rebounded 12 percent in the last year. While that's nothing to sneeze at, it doesn't compare to the windfall that speculators raked in on the S&P 500's 142 percent moonshot in the last 4 years. The Fed made damn-sure that its Wall Street buddies made out like bandits while everyone else was left to struggle with negative equity, frozen wages, chronic high unemployment, and rapidly-diminishing social services.

That's why so many people blow off the "recovery" trope as just more meaningless hype, because it doesn't apply to them or anyone they know. The stats bear this out too, for example, according to a recent McClatchy-Marist poll, 54 percent of the people surveyed "think the country is in an economic downturn." How do you like that? Four years after the recession ended and most people still think we're in a slump.

The reason no one's drinking Obama's "green shoots" Koolaid is because it doesn't jibe with their personal experience. In the real world, jobs are still scarce, wages are still flatlining, pensions and health care benefits are under ferocious attack by management, and stressed-out families are trying to pare-back their expenses wherever possible. So where's the recovery in that mix? There isn't one.

The truth is, most people are just scraping by from paycheck to paycheck. They don't care that the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) rose to 2.5 percent in the second quarter (Average GDP since the end of the recession has been a lousy 2.2 percent) or that exports are doing better than expected or that business investment is up nearly 10 percent in the last 3 months. And they certainly don't care that the shyster bankers posted record profits in Q2. (\$42.2 billion!)

What they care about is jobs, jobs and jobs. And since unemployment is still high and the economy is still wobbly, they're afraid they're going to get their pink slip any day now and be stuck in an unemployment line with millions of other working stiffs. According to a recent survey by Gallup "employed Americans continue to express elevated concerns about their job security. Workers' worries about having their benefits and wages

reduced, their hours cut back, and being laid off surged between 2008 and 2009, and time has not alleviated these concerns." (Gallup) Unbelievable. People are as terrified of getting canned today as they were when Lehman Brothers collapsed five years ago. Some recovery, eh?

And the situation isn't getting better either. Twelve million people still can't find work, and the ones who do find jobs can't make ends meet on the crappy entry-level pay. Then, of course, there's the millions of people who've stopped looking for work altogether and fallen off the government's radar. How do they survive? It's a mystery.

Did you know that, according to Sentier Research, median annual household income is 8.4 percent lower in 2013 than it was in January 2000? That says it all, doesn't it? Working people are not only losing ground, the rate of decline is actually accelerating. That's why September could be a tipping point for the economy. With the payroll tax and budget cuts (sequester) taking a bite out of demand; the spike in gas prices (due to Syria worries) and slowdown in personal consumption will probably be enough to push the economy back into the red zone.

Obama could soften the blow by extending unemployment benefits, reversing the payroll tax increase, or requesting an emergency extension on some of the safety net programs that congress recently defunded, but that's not going to happen. The more likely scenario is that Obama will move ahead with Stage 3 of his regressive structural adjustment program, that is, Euro-style austerity spearheaded by Wall Street loyalist and Rubin-clone, Larry Summers. That's what this is all about, isn't it? The Dissembler in Chief wants to put a trusted ally in the top spot at the Central Bank so he can move on to his budget cutting grand finale where he tries to finish off the middle class with one swift blow to the back of the neck.

Did someone say "shock doctrine"?

CP



DAYDREAM NATION

War Chests

BY KRISTIN KOLB

Recently, I observed some women prancing through downtown Vancouver to invoke International Topless Day. They beamed for the eager tourists and leering male spectators who mobbed them. Traffic halted. iPhones shuttered, capturing the nubile chests. Every major paper and television station in Canada covered those breasts.

It was a happy-hippie interpretation of Femen, the current sensation in flashy feminism. The Ukraine-based group has a simple *raison d'être*: "Our mission is protest. Our weapons are bare breasts."

The Femen - tall, svelte, often blonde, with perky B- and C-cups, weave flowers through their tendrils, scrawl vague bits like, "Fuck Your Morals" and "Breast Feed Revolution" with Sharpies on their chests, appear at VIP affairs, strip, and get arrested. One woman wielded a chainsaw and cut down a prominent crucifix in Kiev. The "No Pope" demo at the Vatican had probably the clearest call to action.

The global media is infatuated. Jeffrey Taylor of *The Atlantic* profiled 22-year-old Inna Shevchenko, the grande dame. "Atop the six-inch high heels of her black felt boots, her wavy, strawberry blonde hair spilling out from beneath a black baseball cap, her eyes mint-green and penetrating, she cut an impressive figure," Taylor coos. They met in a Parisian café, where he ordered a bottle of Côtes du Rhône, and they chatted for some five hours.

Like the American Apparel employees who have endured sexual harassment from sleazy CEO Dov Charney, Femen has its own perv, Victor Svyatski. The *Independent* reported that Svyatski hand-picked the hottest women, and members are afflicted with

Stockholm Syndrome. Femen's allure is now going sour like a bad bottle of wine.

"Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society," Mark Twain said. Perhaps. But these women have received death threats and fled their homes. Give them credit.

This controversy is as old as the Amazons. Can we involve the body in politics without undermining the goal? If a woman undresses, must it be to attract the male gaze, or worse, to submit to Svengalian Sades? But if you've ever worked in the movement, you know that the ascetics, the Bill McKibbens of the world, love getting cuffed in front of the camera, perhaps in a more Christ-like position.

Meanwhile, in the US, it's the fiftieth anniversary of the Equal Pay Act. In August, *The New York Times* Opinionator blog posted an op-ed by Alissa Quart of the outstanding Economic Hardship Reporting Project. The piece leads with a photo of a young professor watching her toddler draw. The woman looks exhausted and resigned. She wears no crown of flowers, brandishes no perfectly brazen breasts, but inhabits plain, black-and-white business casual, with a low-knotted ponytail fraying. She's the American everywoman - she who scrapes and sacrifices for work and family.

Quart finds that almost all parents can't afford day care. Women are quitting their jobs because it doesn't make sense to spend a whole paycheck on paying someone to watch your children. Why moms? Because men are paid more. Only nine percent of women make more than \$75,000 in a country where it's taking six-figures to add up to a middle-class family. When

a woman leaves the work force for more than two years, it's almost guaranteed that her wages and job position will be lower when she returns. The longer you're out, that harder it is to get back in. The glass ceiling is now the glass barricade.

US Census data show that women make 77 cents per dollar made by men. (A *Huffington Post* piece about this study included a sidebar: "10 Bra Mistakes You're Making (and how to fix them).")

Democrats are pushing a fix for the wage gap called the Paycheck Fairness Act, which closes some legal loopholes and mandates a "negotiation skills" training for women. But Congress has chucked this bill eight consecutive times.

What's up with mainstream feminism? Michelle Obama is recording a hip-hop album about broccoli. NOW is a has-been. The EMILY's List top-funded candidate last year was Missouri's Claire McCaskill, one of the two most conservative Democrats in the Senate, who shamelessly embraces all Enbridge pipelines.

These are desperate times for American women.

Perhaps it's time for an army of Lady Godivas to stampede the Senate floor and blind the Peeping Tom Coburns with their bodies, demanding universal child and health care, and penalties for pay gaps. No, Hillary will save the day. We just need a woman in the White House. Then we'll get the raises and villages it takes.

A Godiva Brigade sounds ridiculous. But it's not as ridiculous or revolting as the inequality and greed in America, our government's corporate-sponsored dog and pony show, and collecting campaign war chests for politicians who ignore the depression in which we're quagmired.

Women, we might as well use what we've got because we don't have much. And if we don't, our children will have even less. So hand me a Sharpie, for starters. **CP**

Killing Detroit:

The Collapse of Michigan's Largest City Parallels Long Campaigns to Undermine Labor Radicalism and Racial Integration in America

BY DARWIN BOND-GRAHAM

Underneath all the economic and political symptoms there are really only two causes of Detroit's spectacular bankruptcy. The first cause of the Motor City's decline is corporate America's merciless, and quite successful campaign to annihilate labor unionism, especially the more radical variants. This of course reverses the conservative myth that Detroit was done in by "greedy unions." Far from it. Detroit was done in by wealthy corporations that divested capital from the region in order to pry bigger profits from their workers, be they in the Midwest, or in the US South and Mexico, but capital was also divested to starve the industrial working class of their union building base in the Midwest.

The second cause of Motown's chronic poverty is white racism - not the discriminatory variety whereby some white people treat African Americans unfairly and unkind, but rather the structural and systematic anti-Black policies and practices around which government and the private economy are still largely organized today.

The corporate attack on organized labor, and popular white revanchism to thwart the economic goals of the Black freedom movement have combined to devastate Detroit. The victims are the city's poor, mostly African Americans, but also a small number of impoverished whites and Latinos who have seen essential services disappear while their city becomes a neoliberal playground of privatization.

Of course corporate America's campaign to undermine organized labor wasn't confined to Detroit. Nor was white America's exodus from the urban core into suburban units of exclusionary local government. But the results are clearer in Detroit today than anywhere else. The stark contrast above and below 8 Mile Road, the 8 lane asphalt border separating Detroit, the black post-industrial metropolis, from its white affluent suburbs is impossible to miss.

As the "arsenal of democracy" in the early 1940s, Detroit was turning out more war materiel and weaponry than probably any other city on earth. Several hundred thousand southerners arrived in Michigan during the war to take jobs in the mega-factories that were expanding along the River Rouge, in Hamtramck, and on the banks of Detroit River. After the war most of the tank and bomber assembly lines were converted back to auto manufacturing and other civilian machinery, but Detroit kept a good share of the nation's multi-billion dollar weapons contracts throughout the Cold War. And Detroit kept growing and churning out cars and

machines. Such are the complex contradictions of America's rise to global military and economic power; the working class who built the war machine and produced unimagined quantities of consumer goods, fueling one of the world's greatest historical accumulations of capital, building some of the largest industrial and financial corporations, these same workers were also fostering a culture of labor radicalism.

Marx described the process a century prior. Capital would create the conditions for its own demise on the vast shop floors where toiling workers would find solidarity and organize. Capital's intellectuals have long recognized the dynamic also, but instead of writing mechanistic theories of how the revolution from private ownership to social democracy would naturally unfold, they were busy making plans to diffuse the threat.

In the late 1930s and 1940s Detroit teemed with communists, socialists, anarchists, and other anti-capitalists, in addition to hundreds of thousands of militant workers with no particular ideology straitjacketing them. They all had more than enough gumption to challenge their bosses. Colleen Doody's masterful book, *Detroit's Cold War*, describes a city that for a while was anyone's for the taking, with communists and other radicals fomenting strikes and organizing workers into the ranks of rapidly growing unions, some of them interracial. According to Doody, "the economic collapse of the early 1930s seemingly challenged capitalism and led many Americans to turn to radical ideologies to solve the problems of mass unemployment and widespread hunger. As a result, Detroit's business elites suddenly found their authority contested." Given the times, this meant that capital found its legitimacy contested in the very core of its industrial forge.

There were vicious red hunts too, even during the Great Depression, even at capitalism's nadir and the crisis of authority for the ruling elite. Just after the 1937 sit down strikes in Flint, a Texas Congressman named Martin Dies brought anti-communist hearings to Michigan using shameless racism to bash unions. He even called Michigan's governor a communist sympathizer because of his unwillingness to crush the GM sit down strike with state troopers.

In their history of Detroit's labor movement Steve Babson, David Elsila and Dave Riddle called the post-World War II period an "exhilarating time of protest and popular mobilization." A massive wave of strikes roiled Detroit in the early 1940s, so many that one local newspaper ran a "strike box score" akin to the system that keeps track of hits and runs in baseball. In their militancy, Detroit's industrial working class became the heart of the US labor movement in the 1940s and 1950s. In their numbers the auto workers became a profound national political force. The city's cavernous auto plants became battlegrounds not over mere working conditions and pay, but over ideology, and over control of the American economy. Workers demanded a hand in directing investments and planning production. Radicals attempted

to inspire and mobilize the workers to move beyond narrow business unionism, to build a lasting counter-force to capital on the national political level.

Black radicals forged alliances with white unionists to address racism within the unions, and to attempt what has proven elusive throughout American history, to build a multi-racial front for economic democracy in the biggest industrial city of a powerhouse industrial state. The auto plants were eventually desegregated, as were other industries, and in time the most powerful unions in the United States were integrated, but at the same time the racial and class ideologies that would unravel labor solidarity were poisoning the air.

Socially and geographically many whites in Detroit built walls of exclusion around their residentially segregated housing, their better schools, their better endowed financial and insurance institutions, their hospitals, and their private clubs. They were doing what white workers were doing in virtually every corner of the United States upon their ascent into the middle class. Racism, the complex means of organizing society around white privilege, remained an appealing political program to many white workers, in spite of the gains they made with their Black brothers and sisters in the factories.

By the late 1960s white Detroit was already staging an exodus from the city into the rapidly growing suburbs of Oakland County. The transformation of the US into a post-industrial services and knowledge economy would be seized by these well-positioned white suburbanites. Black Detroiters, still only one generation removed from the plantations of Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Georgia, lacking the social capital and racial pass card of access to economic rights, were trapped below 8 Mile Road. The rebellion of 1967 against the city's mostly white police force and political establishment revealed the raw racism that was tearing the region's working class apart. Many white Michigan residents supported a crack-down on the Black community, unmoved by the root causes of the rioting.

One survey-based study of racial segregation in the Detroit metro region in 1978 concluded that the geographic inequality was primarily the result of the white majority's intransigence and refusal to meaningfully integrate. "Most black respondents expressed a preference for mixed neighborhoods. Whites dramatically underestimate the willingness of blacks to live in racially mixed areas, perhaps because they themselves seldom wish to live in such neighborhoods," the authors, professors of demography at the University of Michigan wrote. "The preferences of whites for neighborhoods that do not include many blacks are one important sources of the maintenance of high levels of residential segregation." Residential location, where a household lived, inside which tax jurisdiction with access to what particular set of public goods, would prove the lynchpin of inequality in Detroit, as it has for all of America. The same survey was updated in 1993, finding little had changed in household loca-

tions and attitudes.

While white Michigan abandoned the city for the suburbs, the industrial and financial corporations with major investments in the region were still maneuvering in their long war against organized labor. But after the 1960s the assault came silently, with fewer noisy hunts for communists, and few, if any uses of cops and hired goons to destroy union mobilizations. Instead, capital utilized revolutions in logistics, telecommunications, transportation, and the international hegemony of the United States to offshore manufacturing to Latin America and Asia where client state regimes, often supported with US dollars and weapons, were free to murder unionists in the name of freedom. Back in the United States unions declined as a result, and millions of workers, white and Black, saw their economic fortunes decline as a consequence.

It's clear from the vast political literature written about Detroit that America's ruling class saw the shop floors of Ford, GM and Chrysler as dangerous agglomerations of race and class conscious labor. Workers in the Midwestern manufacturing sector were very much responsible for the immense gains that most American workers obtained in the post-war period until about 1970. Beginning with the bloody strikes of the 1930s and reaching through into the 1950s labor militancy in Detroit and the rest of the Rust Belt forced America's corporate titans to share the national income and accept a more democratic society.

To break the back of labor unions in America the major corporations and financial companies broke Detroit. Other cities and regions could be weakened, divested from to a point and wounded in this battle, but Detroit had to be absolutely murdered.

The Detroit metropolitan economy reconfigured itself around the suburban office parks of Oakland County, and the wages of whiteness prevailed over the brief post-war possibilities of multi-racial working class solidarity. In the suburbs of Oakland County, and a handful of affluent cities and townships in Wayne and MacComb Counties, many white Michigan families made the leap from the industrial manufacturing era into an economy dominated by health-care, computing, finance, real estate, engineering, insurance, and research and education – the major economic sectors of today. Six of the ten largest employers in Oakland County now are hospitals.

In the process whites in the exurbs of the Detroit metropolitan region became one of the most affluent populations in the United States. More than half of Black Detroit found itself blocked, unable to access and afford the means of social mobility. Black Detroit became one of the poorest populations in the United States, afflicted by the social ills of violence that grow from severe inequality.

Disproportionately, Blacks in Detroit experienced rapid downward mobility. Their salaries, healthcare, and pensions provided from employment in the factories were re-

placed with minimum wages and no benefits in the growing service sector of restaurants, retail, and hospitality. That's if they could get a job at all. Unemployment grew steadily in Detroit. The jobs their fathers had once held in the auto plants, machine shops, and other factories were now held by minimally paid southern laborers without union protections, or else by Mexican and Asian workers in the expanding maquiladoras of the global south.

Detroit's population shrank mostly from the white out-migration to cities and towns like Royal Oak, Grosse Pointe, Birmingham, Troy, Franklin Village and dozens of other independent local governments with their own tax bases, budgets, and school systems. Detroit's 1.6 million people as of 1960 dwindled to 1.2 million by 1980. It fell again to 950,000 in 1990, and has cratered at just above 700,000 today, according to the United States Census.

The city of Troy, incorporated in 1955 in Oakland County just eight miles north of 8 Mile Road, the physical and psychological border of Detroit, grew quickly in the latter half of the 20th Century into an affluent, majority white community. Dozens of other exurban enclaves, most of them smaller, quite a few home to the region's new elite, grew over the same period. As they grew they constantly maneuvered in the state legislature to shield the wealth they brought with them, and to prevent any kind of revenue sharing between the white suburbs and Black central city. For example, in 1999 Oakland County hired a lobbying firm to monitor for and veto any bills in Lansing, the state capital, that might reduce the county's share of the state budget.

What remained of the auto industry's jobs in Michigan were now likely to be in research, development, management, engineering, and other white collar professions. The new offices were shifted to the suburbs, places like Warren, in Macomb County where GM's Technical Center is based. Chrysler relocated from Highland Park (a small municipality entirely surrounded by, and in many ways synonymous with Detroit) to the Oakland County suburb of Auburn Hills thirty miles away from Detroit in 1986 when it began construction of its new headquarters and technical center.

In a sense whites, and later a small group of Black middle class migrants exited Detroit with the social and economic capital they acquired at the height of the city's industrial flower. It was like a run on a bank that causes the institution to implode. Detroit's affluent residents took the human and financial capital of what was once one of the wealthiest cities on earth and they redeposited themselves and their savings beyond the reach of the struggling city.

Because of the highly fractured system of independent local cities, counties, and revenue authorities that characterizes American government, this demographic shift translated into a permanent fiscal crisis for Detroit. Big public pension obligations, or none at all; corrupt mayors, or squeaky clean politicians; it didn't really matter. These influences on

Detroit's fate weren't sufficient, nor necessary to cause the collapse. It was capital and white flight that did the city in. The tectonic shift in incomes and wealth reduced Detroit to the status of a revenue-starved city retaining all its responsibilities of social investment and a much amplified welfare load. The city was prevented from annexing nearby suburbs where retail tax dollars were being captured, and where real estate prices were rising along with family incomes. White Michigan and the new corporate community, largely ensconced in the suburban and rural regions of the state, sat back to watch the urban core burn.

In 1998 as Detroit's fiscal crisis was intensifying and its credit rating was plummeting, Oakland County received a AAA rating from Standard & Poor's. Oakland County's CEO Brooks Patterson, a man who once led an anti-bussing campaign against school integration, bragged about the fiscal prosperity of Oakland. "At that rate, 4 percent, it's almost like free money," Patterson told Crain's Detroit Business in an interview. "You can't borrow money any cheaper than that. I think it's like all our cities and municipalities get an early Christmas gift with this." The rating put Oakland in the top 1 percent of counties in the US in terms of fiscal health. The rating was primarily due to Oakland County's affluent tax base, not any particular style of management by its governors.

Patterson, a prosecutor before he became a Republican party partisan and Oakland County's executive officer, once said that Detroit's first Black mayor, Coleman Young, "pitted the city against the suburbs." Over the years Patterson took every opportunity to blame Detroit and its leaders for the city's fiscal woes. Patterson once also called suburban sprawl "the natural order of things."

An analysis of Detroit and 25 of the independent suburban towns and cities above 8 Mile Road, mostly in Oakland County, shows clearly how the massive, unsustainable debt that is crushing the city came about. Just between 1999 and 2011 the annual median household income for Detroit's residents fell by \$4,300, from \$29,500 to \$25,100. Detroit's households have the lowest incomes in Michigan. The number of unemployed doubled from 7.8 to 15.5 percent of the adult population, with many of these job losses resulting from the 2008 financial crisis.

A handful of the Oakland County suburbs, mostly those bordering the city along 8 Mile Road also saw the incomes of their residents drop, and joblessness rise, causing fiscal problems for these governments also. The rest of Oakland County prospered over the same period, however.

For example, the aptly-named Beverly Hills, a small incorporated village about 7 miles from Detroit has seen the median family income of its residents grow by \$12,700 over the last twelve years, from \$90,300 to \$103,100 today. In a few other Oakland County enclaves families register incomes more than double the nation's average, three times that of

Detroit. These cities, towns, and villages, many of them incorporated in the 1950s and 1960s expressly to absorb white migrants bailing from Detroit, are fiscally healthy units of government. Oakland County today maintains a AAA bond rating from Moody's and uses this to finance many of the smaller townships, villages, and school districts in its limits. Bloomfield Hills School District has maintained a AAA credit rating thanks to its wealthy residents who are solidly in the top 20 percent of US income earners. Ratings on much of Detroit's paper ranges from speculative to junk status, often with "negative outlooks," a phrase in the industry that means downgrades are likely.

Detroit's unraveling is far from over. The bankruptcy process instigated by emergency manager Kevyn Orr is designed to kill off one last vestige of political and economic power of the city's working class - the defined benefit pension obligations of public employees. Finally, if and when Detroit's regimen of austerity comes to an end, renewed investment in the city is likely to come in the form of waves of gentrifying housing and commercial development which may cause mass displacement and provide few benefits to the city's working poor as the jobs created will be more of the same precarious service industry roles. **CP**

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An American Amazon?

Colonizers, Slavers and Speculators in the Upper Amazon

BY SUSANNA B. HECHT

When the American gunboat "Wilmington" steamed through the Amazon in 1899 with a secret US-Bolivian treaty aimed at "Americanizing" the Acrean territory, (Bolivian at the time) the Brazilians, though outraged, were not exactly surprised. The antecedents to the "Wilmington" affair – and the revolutionary response to it, lay in a set of long held schemes, conceptions and explorations that had unfolded during the previous half century that reflected a US attitude about US colonies in the Amazon that Brazilians, and especially Amazonians found suspect. As far back as the 1850s, the US Confederacy had dreams for the colonization of Amazonia, and scientists sponsored by America's top scientific institutions (Harvard museum, US Naval Observatory, the Smithsonian) floated down the Amazon in support of this agenda. In a later decade, Americans began to develop plans for a New World "Liberia". North Americans with entrepreneurial ambitions for the region never seemed to be lacking, with many "up country" schemes emerging in the 1870 and 1880s. By the 1890s the Wall Street investors were prepared to fund an international syndicate that would occupy some of the richest rubber forests in all of Amazonia, setting up

a syndicate and colony: in short a new polity in the heart of Amazonia's most valuable forests. It began before the civil war.

An American Slave State in the Amazon

The Baron of Rio Branco, Brazil's boundary mastermind was well aware of long standing American interest in Amazonia, due to his own time in the United States and US forays during the Imperial period when Rio Branco's father was Foreign minister. At that time, Mathew Fontaine Maury, Maury's brother-in-law William Lewis Herndon, Harvard Museum Director, Louis Agassiz, and their ally, the Brazilian statesman Tavares Bastos had to convince Emperor Pedro II of the virtues allowing ships from any nation to travel on the Amazon and to let Americans settle there in large numbers.

Maury himself never stepped foot in the Amazon but deeply affected American, and especially Confederate ambitions for the region. Maury, a dedicated Confederate, was an eminent scientist, and like Agassiz, was head of an important institution, the US Naval Observatory, whose equivalent today might be NASA. Both were men of science, believed profoundly in God's design, in scientific racism, and in the virtues and the necessity of American colonization of the Amazon. In Maury's view this was the best way to develop the riches lying fallow under the louche energies of Brazilian dominion. The mechanisms to achieve this change should include free trade, open navigation, steam travel and American entrepreneurial spirit in the form of colonization. And slave labor. For Maury, it was black labor – the cheapest on offer and white management that was key to transforming this immense region.

Maury, born in Tennessee to a prestigious but downwardly mobile Virginian family, was a brilliant autodidact. Maury wrote what many considered to be the foundational work in oceanography a doorstopper called *The Physical Geography of the Seas*, a tome credited with expanding American maritime dominance at the mid 19th century. Maury's technique was one of promoting widespread observations from various fleets, whalers and merchant ships on position, water temperature, prevailing winds, pressure and other elements of interest that were then sent to him at the Observatory. He then assembled this onslaught of data into a system of maritime maps of wind and water flow. This strategy of information collection was rather like crowd sourcing or "Wiki" *avant la lettre*. By coordinating thousands of disparate observations, he was to see surprising connections in practical navigations and to collate immense amounts of observational knowledge, creating practical navigation tools so powerful that he was described as a kind of Confederate Newton. He passionately believed that the physical phenomena he was observing were manifestations of Divine Intelligence and Godly Design and the movement of winds and waters, the subtle machinery that directed the globe, as the handiwork of the "Architect of

Creation.” Even for the times this was not a particularly trenchant analysis in the realms of physics or astronomy, nonetheless his prestige and popular reach were great.



Commodore Matthew Maury: Image US Navy Archives

Maury was one of the most decorated American men of science of the nineteenth century and received numerous awards and accolades in Europe. In his role as the top Navy scientist he was intimately connected with the American ambitions and international diplomacy of sea faring, steamship development and river trade. He was powerful enough to mobilize the national resources to send Lardner Gibbon, and Maury's brother-in-law, William Lewis Herndon, on an expedition that would produce one of the durable Amazon travel classics: *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazons*. As Maury outlined it in his letter of instruction to Herndon, the expedition was to “prepare the way for that chain of events” so that the region would be understood “as an American Colony.”

This reconnaissance was meant to provide the empirical foundation for American colonization of the Amazon: to, as he put it: “revolutionize, republicanize and Anglo-Saxonize that valley.”

Maury's interest in Amazonia and Confederate imperialism had many sources: his professional work on the flow of currents; his yearnings for a “Southern Manifest Destiny;” and his preference for certain theories about environmental determinism and racial hierarchies. All of these coalesced in a vision of a “Confederacy in the Tropics” that would reach from Virginia to the Amazon, and a broader hemispheric division between American slave and non-slave economies. Maury and the confederate elite were engaged in a deep political re-imagining of US politics and North America's global role, shifting from Jeffersonian centralized governance, isolationist, yeoman trajectory to the more imperial thought, and laissez faire economies. The important Southern segment of this movement was inflamed by a fiery nationalism, Manifest Destiny (in this case focused outside the continental US,) international interventionist politics, and was also profoundly pro-business.

“Our Sweet Sea”

Maury's argument for linkages between America and Amazonia took its inspiration from his study of wind and currents from which he concluded that a log released at the mouth of the Amazon would float through the Caribbean (that “American Mediterranean” and “our sweet sea”) past the Mississippi through the Florida Straights and the Gulf of Mexico. Thus, the Amazon, just like rivers of the Southern States flowed ultimately to the Caribbean. The Amazon in his view had two estuaries: the first where it poured into the Atlantic, and the second, its “true estuary,” where it deposited its sediments in the seas off the US Southern Gulf Coast. This was the logic that folded Amazonia into North American hegemony. Oceanographically, Maury said, “That river basin (the Amazon) is closer to us than to Rio and puts ...the mouth of that river within the Florida pass and as much under our control as is the mouth of the Mississippi.”

In Maury's view, in earlier times, civilizations had emerged from discrete watersheds like the Tigris, or the Yellow River.

But now, he believed, large multi-river basins would become the great cultural and economic integrators. Amazonia was seen as part of an “American Mediterranean” – the Caribbean basically – through which the colonization and commerce of systems of watersheds (including the giant waterways like Mississippi, Orinoco, Amazon and Central American rivers) would be mastered by a “New Rome” based in the Southern US – New Orleans or Norfolk: “ships sailing from the mouth of the Amazon for whatever port of the world are forced to our very doors by the southeast and northeast trade winds: New York is the half-way house between Pará and Europe. For Maury, the ocean currents mingled not only the waters and sediments of Amazonia with those of North America, but also their destinies.

Maury viewed the tropics as fulfilling divine purposes. The linking of American Manifest Destiny to God’s glorious ocean devices had several implications. By mid-century, the Southern slave economies more or less understood that they would enjoy no further territorial expansion in North America. Excluded from the Northern great plains and the West, Southern slavocrats shifted their gaze to the tropics.. Instead of the Jeffersonian “Empires of Liberty”, the war cry of some Southern secessionists was “Imperial Republics of Slavery”. As the conservative journal *DeBow’s Review* would put it in 1849: “We must meet our Destiny, a Manifest Destiny over all of Mexico, South America, the West Indies”. Some antebellum Southerners, such as soon to be Confederate President Jefferson Davis, already viewed the Gulf of Mexico as Confederate Territory. Others, like Mississippi Governor John Quitman, a veteran of the annexation of Texas and the Mexican American wars, turned his gaze to the tropical terrains full of squabbling caudillos, proto revolutions, native peoples and freebooters of all kinds – and saw a Central and South America that could be disciplined and developed as part of a new American “Confederacy”.

A Confederate tropical Manifest Destiny would be beneficial in many ways. Maury, like many other southerners, feared a Malthusian crisis in a South over run with Black slaves, leading to problems of race war and miscegenation. Since slave systems could not expand on the North American continent they needed a dumping ground for “excess” population. The Amazon would be the salvation of American slavery:

The Amazon valley is to be the safety valve for our Southern States. When they become over populated with slaves, the Africa slave trade will cease and they (southerners) will send these slaves to the Amazon, just as the Miss. (sic) valley has been the escape valve for the slaves of the Northern now free states, so will the Amazon valley be to that of the Miss” “...it would be relieving our own country of the slaves, it would be hastening the time of our deliverance and it would be putting off indefinitely the horrors of that war of the

racess which, without an escape is surely to come upon us. ... It is becoming a matter of faith among leading southern men that the time is rapidly approaching when in order to prevent this war of the races and its horrors, they will in self defense be compelled to conquer parts of Mexico and Central America and make slave territory of that – and that is now free.

By colonizing Amazonia, the tensions between the Northern and Southern states would be significantly reduced; and “The Union would be saved!” Maury walked a subtle line vis a vis the larger international slavery question as well: “Shall Amazonia be supplied with this class from the U. States or from Africa? In the former it will be the transfer of the place of servitude but the making of no new slaves. In the latter in will be the making of slaves of freemen and adding greatly to the number of slaves in the world.”

Beyond the ideological and territorial ambitions lurked economic concerns. Southern cotton soils were becoming depleted, and Maury asserted: “I’m pretty clear that the only remaining cotton country...is to be found on the southern tributaries of the Amazon.” Maury more or less envisioned in one of his more rapturous passages the entire basin devoted to cotton production. With the British demand for the crop accelerating, Maury felt that British self interest, given their immense dependence on the cotton industry, would permit them to cast a blind eye over the way the commodity was being produced in spite of their aggressive abolitionist politics.

In a stressed southern economy, beset with depleted soils, the loss of the lucrative river trade to the new railroads, and a dim future for the institutions of southern life, the rejuvenating energies of Amazonian colonization would rescue the south from its own decadence and socio-ecological problems in the face of an emergent industrializing North American economy. This move to the tropics, coupled with the commercial and entrepreneurial spirit of the US would transform the Amazon valley in the same way Confederates (and their slaves) had remade the Mississippi from a wild place into Dixie, a prosperous “Land of Cotton”.

How Fortunate the Amazon is Empty

But should Amazonia be peopled with, in Maury’s words, “an imbecile and indolent people?” The answer for Maury was clearly “no” – “the sort of labor necessary to the extensive cultivation of cotton plants is compulsory labor.” “Looking into the future”, Maury wrote “I have seen an African slave populations of America clustered around the border of this “Mediterranean sea”.

Maury was inspired enough in his terms of reference letter to Herndon: “It is reserved for the European race not only to exhibit the most perfect phase of Human Civilization but to impress that Civilization on other races of the World.” More to the point, “the progress of the Negro would never develop

from within, but by necessity be imposed from without.” Informed by these ideas on the racial superiority and the fashionable environmental determinism of the day, Maury would say this about Amazonia:

This is a place for slaves. The European and Indian have been battling with these forests for 300 years and not left the merest mark. If someday its vegetation is tamed, if one day its soil is reclaimed from the forest, its wild animal and reptiles subdued by the plow and axe, it will have been done by the African. This is the land of Parrots and monkeys’ and only the African is up to the task which man must realize there.

While the brawn would be black, the technical and sophisticated knowledge would remain the domain of their white masters.

With abolition, there would be four million slaves suddenly loosed into the American scene. It would be far better to take white Americans and their slaves *en masse*, and as had happened in the Mississippi, people a new place with a fruitful system until it reached its full productivity. These views required some empirical reconnaissance, and it was Maury’s kinsman Herndon and midshipman Gibbon who were charged with the task.

Maury’s imperial position implicitly expressed the fashionable imperial ideas of Vattel, the Swiss jurist of international law whose views on sovereignty and “Natural Law” suggested if a country were not effectively occupying their lands, or held more than it would use or cultivate, it should not oppose itself to others able to do so. The tropes of emptiness, primitivity, and incapacity were hardly new in the annals of tropical claiming, but the 19th century North American interests in the Amazon Scramble animated several types of logics: of economic interests melded to divine right, merit bonded to destiny, chosen people (within the racial hierarchies), preferred political system (republics) and the virtues of free trade (central to the economic theory of the time) as well as in the larger political imagination involving righteous dominion and heavenly purpose. “How fortunate it was that the Amazon was empty” wrote Maury, “since then it could be populated by North American slaves.”

Maury’s Instructions

Maury’s letter to Herndon of November 13, 1850 was wild about the possibilities of colonization. In Maury’s opinion, which later echoed throughout Herndon’s tome, opening the river to free trade would soon induce a flood of colonists and their slaves from the US, and with steamboats and open navigation, a vibrant economy would emerge – “It would be regarded for all practical purposes as an American colony.” Maury admonished Herndon not to let on to officials that he was reviewing Amazonia for its possibilities for Confederate colonization. Instead, Maury emphasized Herndon should

forge friendships with governments and interests on the upper Amazon – Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador because if these countries embarked on regional navigation rights with Brazil, a means of “free trade” with external trading partners (the US) might indeed be possible.

Maury’s letter of instruction to Herndon urges exploration of “familiarity”: could one grow the southern crops like cotton, sugar, rice, tobacco? Was there any coal? Did the Amazon cut its banks like the Mississippi? The exotica Herndon did note are basically not very exotic: chincona bark for quinine and reports on the rubber industry. Herndon himself remarked that the Amazon itself was really just like the Mississippi at high flood. Maury was at pains to reiterate that the Amazon and the Mississippi were more or less analogues and commercial complements of each other. Maury relied heavily on the Herndon reports and reiterated that though the river itself might be enormous, and it was the jungly Amazon of swamps and snakes, the mighty Mississippi with its bayous and water moccasins was not so different. The Amazon would not be beyond the scope of southern skills and practices. Rather justifying territorial occupation on “ecological otherness” to be tamed by a northern colonial model – the approach more typical of other tropical colonialisms, the claims here were based on *similarity*, an unusual characterization for tropical imperial ambitions. These were wedded to the congruence of their economic systems (slavery), their markets and the potential new outlets for American products.

Herndon was obedient to the wishes of his kinsman. His travelogue of 1853 refers constantly to the similarities of pasture, of fruits, (though he does note the exceptional deliciousness of the native Guanabana and of course cacao) of cuisine and how local foods could substitute for northern staples. While there is plenty of the usual Amazon tropica-lia (turtle eggs, close calls with alligators, bugs are irritating, some rough rapids etc etc) Herndon’s account has less heavy breathing than the usual “darkest Amazon” narratives: The natives are basically not so bad but they could benefit from military colonies and compulsory work; Herndon’s rowers seem relatively tractable compared to other reports, including that of his compatriot Gibbon who languishes on the Bení and fears abandonment by his guides. All the officialdom that Herndon meets yearns for American know how. Herndon was at pains to describe the general approval he finds everywhere for American colonization and free trade. The implicit argument was that if any foreign power were to have colonies there, by far the most “pre-adapted” would be southern slavocrats and their chattel who had done it all before. Maury hinted to Herndon to look for large areas to acquire on Peru’s upper Huallaga (today a major coca producing zone), what Maury would describe as the “New Tennessee.”

Herndon’s trip could be summed up this way: “I presume that the Brazilian government would impose no obstacles to

the settlement of this country by any of the citizens of the United States who would choose to go there and carry their slaves: and I know the thinking people on the Amazon would be glad to see them.”

Herndon's book became a best seller. The Navy alone published and distributed 10,000 copies, but Herndon's account was just one of a two volume travel narrative. Herndon's companion, Midshipman Lardner Gibbon had taken different routes and informed on other parts of the basin: Herndon went through Peru into Brazil, and Gibbon went to Brazil via Bolivia, through the Mamoré branch into the Madeira. Gibbon's memoir was somewhat lost in the flurry and publicity that attended the Herndon narrative. Indeed many modern editions of the “Travels” completely omit Gibbon. He was younger, less connected, traveled the tougher route over the Bolivian Andes and saw a different Amazon. His report was sometimes dismissed as juvenile, perhaps due to his appreciation of spirit and beauty in women and horseflesh (with ample and admiring descriptions of both). He spent time amongst the muleteers and traders and had a good deal of rough travel. The most daunting part of his (or anyone's) journey from Bolivia on to the main channel of the Amazon was getting through the almost 250 km of rapids and falls on the Madeira river, the graveyard of many explorers and ambitions. The devil's cauldron of these rapids separated the rich Bolivian rubber forests from the Amazon river access to Atlantic markets. Gibbon's careful notes on the rapids and his claim that whatever difficulties existed, the long term benefits of getting around systems of falls, whirlpools, etc would far outweigh its costs later struck a chord for many seeking the “main chance” in the Amazon.

Gibbon was a better ethnographer by far than Herndon, who was mostly interested in native people as coerced labor, or objects of annihilation: “This seems to be their destiny. Civilization must advance though it tread on the neck of the savage, or even trample him out of existence” For Gibbon “the industrial, agricultural and manufacturing people of this country are principally among the aborigines” and he goes into a recitation of smelting, jewelry making, weaving, planting, brewing, brickmaking. Cultivation of multicolored native tree cottons, and the richness of the dye plants are duly noted. The mineral exchanges between the high and lowlands, and the placer mines of gold are commented upon and their value calculated. He reports that among the Chiquitano Indians there was great love of music making and instrument manufacture aptitude in reading, mathematics and languages. Gibbon was in the lands of the Mission cultures of the Upper Amazon, and in the shadow realm of the great Pre-Colombian societies of the Moxos. Among the Yacaré Indians, Gibbon noted, “There are two characteristic of the Indian we particularly notice: his honesty and his truthfulness”. Gibbon's view of natives is was the counterpoint of the noble savage to Herndon's savage brutes.

Gibbon paid close attention to local color. He notes runaway slaves in the Bolivian side of the Madeira, (said to number 2,000 – an enormous number at the time, and a figure that hardly boded well for new immigrant slave based production yearned for by Maury), the village of Borba, composed almost entirely of blacks and the free black militias in Mato Grosso. He provided detailed information on forts, economic activities of the most varied types, military men and equipment because he was in a position to actually see them. Gibbon's report reflects the social milieu where he traveled closer to the realities of the Amazonian economies. Among later adventurers and explorers, it was Gibbon's work that was the more useful guide, not the popular Herndon overheated imperial account. In terms of measurement and observation, Gibbon's survey was more precise, and his judgment less clouded by an external agenda

Gibbon's narrative, in contrast to Herndon, is not a story of the primitives and yokels yearning for American salvation. He describes a dinner party in La Paz where the lovely hostess engages him in a lively conversation about politics: “She expressed approval of the American people but not some of their actions...she asked me to explain to her the meaning of all the articles she saw in the La Paz newspapers on the subject of Cuba. Turning suddenly, she looked up and said “what are you doing here Senhor Gibbon, do you want Bolivia also?”

The answer, although Gibbon did not know it then, was “Yes.”

Tropical Dixies

Amazonian colonization faded for a time as geopolitical project due to the US civil war, and the Brazilian war with Paraguay. Maury's ideas did stimulate a migration of southerners who preferred immigration to Brazil where the “peculiar institution” still thrived, to the problems reconstruction in the United States. While they were inspired and influenced by Maury, their move was a largely personal solution to the loss of the Civil War and abolition and their actions were leached of geopolitics.

Southern migrants were further encouraged by the writings in the 1850s of Maury's contemporary, Colonel Lansford Hastings. Hastings had had an active life as a colonizer, and dreamed of emulating Sam Houston by wrenching land from Mexico, proclaiming it an independent Republic and later having it annexed by the US. To encourage westward migration he had a brisk sideline churning out books on routes for immigrants into California. His prestige in this arena declined drastically due to the unfortunate “Hastings cutoff” through the Sierra Nevada that was used by the desperate and ultimately cannibalistic Donner party, so humorously described by Mark Twain in *Roughing It*. This understandably undermined confidence in his North American schemes, but he was undaunted and redirected his frontier ambitions to

the Amazon.

Hastings went to Brazil, carried out some preliminary assessments, promptly wrote his "Immigrants Guide to Brazil" and organized a colony in Santarem, a town at the mouth of the Tapajos. "The Amazon", Hastings noted "reminds us of the Mississippi". The colony itself was not so successful, and the travails the migrants endured reads like melodramatic novel with extortion, shipwrecks, mutiny, and on board epidemics. A few families endured and were quite successful, and as elsewhere in Brazil, Americans were considered innovators in agriculture. Many English speaking tourists and scientists washed up on the doorsteps of the Santarem Confederates and enjoyed their hospitality. The Anglophone enclave at Santarem attracted adventurers of all types including an Englishman named Mr. Wickham, his wife Violet and their four children who resided there for several years. Wickham devised the biopiracy in the 1870s that would ultimately unravel the Amazon rubber economy when he shipped out some 70,000 seeds to Britain's Royal Gardens at Kew.

Other migrants, including some Confederate military men, joined Latin American armed forces. John Randolfe Tucker, a Rear Admiral in the Confederate Army was invited to join the Peruvian Navy with a few hand-picked Confederate officers. Tucker and his cohort of confederates were responsible for naming the Ucayali river port of Leticia at the intersection of Peru, Colombia and Brazil. It was named after President Tyler's granddaughter, the first person to raise the confederate flag. James Orton, traveling under the auspices of the Smithsonian in 1867, enjoyed meeting the Confederate crew on the Ucayali as he traveled around the upper Amazon in his economically quantitative reconnaissance of the upper Amazon.

The impact of Maury and Herndon on Amazonian enterprises and entrepreneurs was palpable in imaginary travels as well as concrete tropical ventures. In light of Confederate colonies on the Amazon, the young Mark Twain's yearning to take a steamboat to the Amazon and become a coca entrepreneur seems not so far fetched. He had read Herndon's book and noting coca cultivation, dreamed of introducing this substance to the world at large. Others, alive to the colonization discussion but concerned about a different dimension of the slavery question – "The problems of the Free Negro" – began to dream of colonies in the Amazon, not for masters but for freed American slaves.

New World "Liberias"

On December 3, 1861, in his address to Congress, President Lincoln asked that steps be taken for colonization of slaves liberated in the confiscation of property "used for insurrectionary purposes" as they were now essentially wards of the state. "...In any event, steps should be taken for colonization ...at some place or places and climate congenial to them. It

might be well too, to consider whether free colored people already in the United States could not, in so far as individuals may desire, be included in such colonization...To carry out the plan of colonization may involve the acquiring of territory and the appropriation of money..." Congress gave the executive the power to begin to explore this state sponsored colonization – in essence deportation for the emerging class of ex-slaves and to a degree, free blacks. Lincoln had, after all called for a "colony of freed Negroes in Central America and provinces in Nuevo Grenada" – today known as Colombia, Lincoln was to support "New World Liberias" in five major public addresses including two State of the Union speeches, and in the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Among those who were vigorous advocates of this position was Lincoln's informal advisor, founder of the Republican party and major negotiator with the Confederacy, Francis Blair. Blair had been in favor of simply annexing Central America, arguing that "the door is now open...to receive the enfranchised colored race born amongst us."

It fell to Mr. William Seward, the Secretary of State to address this question in substantive ways. Seward was not faint hearted when it came to acquiring huge expanses: he had purchased Alaska in 1867. Seward approached the ministries of countries with tropical colonies – Britain, France, Holland – all with colonies in the Caribbean and Guyanas about the feasibility of US black colonization. Seward also indicated that many free blacks in the US also wished to emigrate if the necessary guarantees were assured them by the US and the nations to which they would go. The European powers were not happy about the prospect of a sudden onslaught of free blacks into their colonies who would maintain their US citizenship because this would enhance the potential and pretexts for US incursions. The number of slaves in the US was among the highest in the hemisphere, and most of the New World colonies and young republics were having enough trouble with their own domestic insurrections and racial conflicts without a deluge of more or less indigent American black expatriates. Lincoln and Seward had pressed Kansas Senator Samuel Clarke Pomeroy into service to review possible colonization sites in northern South America and Central America for a new "Deep South." Pomeroy is best known today for his political bribery trial and later for his Chairmanship of the Santa Fe Railroad. Pomeroy's plan involved the annexation of the Colombia province of Chiriqui, on the northern rim of South America, a place later known as Panama.

Amazon Apartheid

One person with keen interest in Lincoln's vision was the US minister to Brazil, General James Watson Webb. Famous as a bon vivant and ladies man, Webb had owned newspapers, railroads and later enjoyed many diplomatic posts. Webb reflected a strand within the abolitionist wing of the

Democratic party that thought the solution to the inevitable problems of emancipation lay in tropical resettlement of ex-slaves in Amazonia. Webb viewed black colonization as an alternative to what otherwise would develop into socially undesirable miscegenation and “inevitable” race war.

Following this view of the nations needs, and with Webb’s understanding of black adaptation to the tropics, the unusual features of Brazilian slavery and its free men of color, Webb advanced a set of proposals to and negotiating points he hoped to raise with Emperor Pedro II: 1) the colonization should be cheap; 2) liberation need not be immediate, nor should servitude linger; 3)immigrants would take up an “apprenticeship” in the colony; 4) colonization costs should be paid for from the products of the apprenticeship; 5) colonists would ultimately end their political connection with the US because Brazilian society, more tolerant of people of color, would provide more possibilities of advancement. In short, Webb was arguing for transforming slaves freed in the US into indentured labor in Amazonia. Webb suggested that the emancipated slaves would be entrusted to a joint stock colonization company (headed, naturally, by Webb) who would then resettle them in Brazil. Thus, former slaves would be transformed from personal to corporate chattel until they paid off their settlement costs. Webb believed that American slaves were more docile and hard working than “the fierce, warlike and intellectual.” Africans who comprised the Brazilian slave population, who were “ready for insurrection and capable of extensive conspiracies to effect their liberation”. Webb felt that Brazil’s problems with Black insurgency could be resolved by a huge influx of American ex-slaves. The addition of many thousands of free Blacks, would undermine the belligerent Afro-Brazilian insurgencies through the calming cultural impact of the “docile” American ex-slaves, and the flooding of Amazonia with another form of labor.

Webb’s solution argued for immediate expatriation of US blacks to Amazonia in order to “render Brazil the richest among kingdoms of the Earth”. As he put it: “The African slave trade can never again supply the Negro labor alone suited to the region, and white labor is quite out of the question.” Webb proposed that the US should initially pay for the transportation of former slaves and North American black freemen to the Amazon where Brazil would supply the lands, about 100 acres per colonist. The costs inherent in the immigration (whether of transportation, land costs etc) could be defrayed by the income generated by the products of the “apprenticeship” of several years (up to ten). After a time, Black immigrants could take up Brazilian citizenship with the rights that accrued to freemen in the Brazilian Empire. Thus, freed American slaves would be basically re-enslaved to cover the costs of their new colonization. Webb urged the rapid adoption of this model due to the prejudice that prevailed within the United States. “The US,” said Webb, would be “Blessed by his (African-American) absence and the rid-

dance of a curse which has well nigh destroyed her.”

Webb’s ambitious plan was deflected by Seward, whose mild response emphasized a decision to resolve the US slavery question within the nation a policy turnaround from the previous postures of the administration, and the program Seward himself had outlined earlier. These extravagant plans, coupled with machinations of US entrepreneurs in countries of the Upper Amazon, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador contributed to a certain coolness and obstructionism in Brazilian diplomacy towards an Amazon-American colony whether of whether slavocrats or free Blacks. At a time of significant racial problems and uprisings in Brazil which would not abolish slavery until 1888, the idea of the infusion of a huge population of “free” blacks was alarming, especially since racial ideas of the day suggested that they hampered modern development. In any case, this particular American ambition for the Amazon was tabled, as the US was caught up in reconstruction and assassinations, and Brazil and its allies devoted themselves to the crushing of Paraguay.

The “American Amazon” schemes did not bear much fruit, but the development of these programs occurred at the highest levels within the US Government and were promoted by its most august scientific institutions and were widely publicized at the time. While these forays were initially meant to “off shore” US racial problems through state mediated programs justified by Confederate Manifest Destiny or a New World Liberia, the next iterations were based on adventurers and entrepreneurs and carried no virtuous colonial social gloss, but rather incarnated the sparer lines of resource imperialism and speculations around a prized and globalized commodity – rubber.

US Colonization in the Upper Amazon

The Amazon was alive with adventurers: In the 1860s and 70s, the US engineer and Mexican revolutionary sympathizer, and surveyor of part of the Bolivian Amazon, George Earl Church began to plan major railroads to link Bolivia with the Amazon outlets on the Madeira, the precursor of the construction of the disastrous Madeira Mamoré rail line. Today, Church resides as a footnote in Amazonian Studies, but he was as ubiquitous an explorer-entrepreneur as his friend, the celebrated imperial botanist and biopirate, Clements Markham, or the widely traveled Sir Richard Burton – diplomat, ethnographer, libertine and translator of the *Kama Sutra*, *Epigrams on Priapus*, *The Arabian Nights* as well as the Portuguese masterpiece, the *Lusiads*. These men were regularly at the intersection of journalism, exploration and uprisings, with developed tastes in history and ethnography. Markham and Church knew each other from their ramblings in the Upper Amazon; Markham was Church’s literary executor, and promoted him for Vice President of the Royal Geographical Society.

In 1868, with the new 1867 Ayacucho treaty boundaries

in hand, Church negotiated the concession to canalize the Madeira-Mamoré falls or to construct a railway around them with the Bolivian government. These included the navigation rights on the Bolivian Amazon affluents, and the right to exact toll and freight charges for 25 years through his Bolivian joint venture company. Because the Madeira River is in fact in Brazilian lands, his proposition required the consent of Brazil. Church was able to convince the Brazilian government to give him the Madeira concession directly, which it did. He integrated these rights into a second company – The Madeira – Mamoré Railway Company with mineral and land rights adjacent to the route of the railroad, a concession of some 560 km². The persuasive Church raised some £6,000,000 in bonds from London venture capitalists despite Bolivia's very dubious reputation in international lending circles. Church's survey experience in the region, the fact that he had worked as a formal analyst for several upper Amazon governments (Peru, Ecuador, Brazil and Bolivia and who knows what other clandestine partners) gave him a legitimacy lacking in others hawking upper Amazon real estate.

It certainly helped that gold had recently been discovered in the Caupolicán district just to the south of the Acre, an area to be served by the proposed railroad. Church began his enterprise, with subcontracts to a Philadelphia construction firm, P T Collins, who sent some 750 American laborers, 200 Bolivian Indians and 200 Ceará migrants to the site where they actually built tracks and ran a train (whose main engine they named "Colonel Church") The business itself collapsed in a complex multinational cloud of litigation involving Bolivia coastal compradors dismayed at the possible deflection of trade from their Pacific venues to Atlantic ones, various British interests, and bribery scandals involving the Bolivian President. Indeed, when everything fell through, a fairly regular destiny for most Madeira-Mamoré ambitions, the transportation development rights ultimately were resold to King Leopold II.

"An East India at our very doors!"

The Bolivians continued their own ambitions for settlement and opened negotiations with yet another American, Azazel Piper. In the first real attempt at a Charter Company in the Upper Amazon, the "Colonization Company of California" incorporated in San Francisco in 1870, hoping the vision of yet another frontier would attract the pioneers and gold rush magnates at the edge of the Pacific. Unlike Church's enterprise that focused on the infrastructure development and navigation rights, Piper preferred to speculate directly on the land and the minerals. He obtained two enormous parcels for his concession.

The first was 90,000 square miles which he agreed to colonize with Americans and Europeans over a period of 25 years. The colonization company would have rights over all territory not formally registered with Bolivian law ("vacant and

uninhabited lands") and to all Siriono or other "nomadic" Indian lands from the Madeira to the Rio Grande (the river just outside of the modern city of Santa Cruz). The company would have the rights to emit its own currency and develop its own banking system, as well as exclusive navigation rights on the Purús, Juruá and Madeira rivers. The Company could levy taxes and develop infrastructure. Immigrants would produce spices, fruits rubber – the usual plentitude – and have access to the tractable and able labor provided by the local settled Indians, whose virtues were so nicely evoked by Gibbon.

The real allurement was the Caupolicán area to which Piper's company had exclusive territorial and mineral rights for 50 years, an area deemed to be extremely rich in alluvial gold deposits, which could be exploited by the new techniques elaborated in California gold fields and silver mines. On top of that were coal, cobalt, copper, tin, salt and diamonds. Bolivia's riches were explicitly meant to echo California's frontier as an upper Amazon El Dorado. Piper explicitly compared Bolivian riches to those of California, envisioning a robust agrarian economy supplying the mines. The territory would stretch from the Madeira to the headwaters of the Javary. And it was rich in gold: The madre de dios river today is the site of vast and disastrous alluvial gold extraction.

The entrepreneurs of the southern Hemisphere were hardly alone in their interest in the extremely valuable forests of the upper Amazon. Rubber came from that place of confused boundaries and nothing much resembling a functional state, a place that was up for grabs. Regional governments were soon in guerilla wars with one another and wall street itself soon saw a main chance with a new and significant Amazonian enterprise: the Bolivian Syndicate which was meant to fund an upper Amazon colony in the most valuable rubber lands in the world. **CP**

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Focusing Hiroshima

A Conversation with elin o'Hara slavick

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

Hiroshima was targeted in part for its "focusing effect." The hills surrounding the city, according to a secret memo prepared by Leslie Grove, "would considerably increase the blast damage." Maximizing the blast damage was the primary

goal for the use of the atomic bomb. The intent was, again in the sterile words of General Groves, to create an explosion “sufficiently spectacular” to “obtain the greatest psychological effect” on the Japanese people and the rest of the world. In other words, the atomic bomb from the beginning was viewed as the ultimate instrument of terror.

The bomb was released from the bays of the Enola Gay at 8:15 in the morning Hiroshima time. Gravity did the rest. It took the 140-pound weapon packed with uranium-235 precisely 43 seconds to fall from 31,060 feet to 1,968, when it detonated, 800 feet off target because of a crosswind.

The weather was clear that morning. The citizens of the city were just arriving at work and children to their schools when the bomb exploded over the Shima Surgical Hospital with the force of 16 kilotons of TNT, obliterating nearly five square miles of the city. About 70 percent of Hiroshima’s buildings were destroyed by the initial blast and the firestorm that followed it.

More than 80,000 people died, many of them simply vanishing instantly, leaving no trace of their existence on earth. Others died a more agonizing death, often without any treatment for their wounds, largely because more than 90 percent of Hiroshima’s doctors and nurses were killed in the blast. Another 70,000 survived their injuries, their bodies scarred with savage burns.

American military officials later griped about the inefficiency of the bomb’s radioactive component, complaining that only 1.7 percent of the radioactive material “fissioned.” But this was more than enough to another 2,000 deaths from leukemia and cancer caused by the radioactive after-effects of the bombing.

Indeed, the radiation from the blast can still be detected in household objects, leaves, human tissue. This is the focus of elin o’Hara slavick’s startling new work, *After Hiroshima*, an intimate photographic exploration of the consequences, radioactive and moral, of the Hiroshima bombing. Slavick’s photographs of objects that survived and were mutated by the blast have just been published in an exquisitely produced volume by Daylight Press. Slavick is a professor of Visual Art, Theory and Practice at the University of North Carolina. Her previous work includes *Bomb After Bomb: a Violent Cartography*, with an introduction by Howard Zinn.

JSC: *In your previous book, the chilling Bomb After Bomb: a Violent Cartography, you vividly depict through maps the wounding of the earth from what the government rather benignly calls nuclear “testing.” In After Hiroshima, you narrow*

the focus of the lens, examining small objects, bottles, fragments, and leaves from the blast zone. Can you describe what it felt like to have such an intimate relationship with these objects from one of the great crimes of modern history?

EOS: Intense. I was aware of the massive shift from the macro to the micro – from abstract cartographic drawings of places the US has bombed in *Bomb After Bomb: A Violent Cartography* mostly done from maps and from the aerial perspective to a searingly intimate experience with Hiroshima on the ground, over 60 years after the A-bomb, but still on the ground. To hold the fragile and hallowed A-bomb artifacts from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in my gloved hands was a very powerful experience. I felt lucky and guilty, privileged and sad, humbled and awed: glass bottles melted into dark knots; a delicate hair comb with one tooth missing; a metal canteen with two small rust holes; fragments of steel beams that were transformed into atomic masks and architectural enigmas through the cyanotype process – placing the objects on sun/UV sensitive paper and exposing them to the sun for 10 minutes, rinsing them in water, witnessing the white shadows appear in fields of varying indigo blue.

As an activist I often feel helpless and rendered dysfunctional in terms of changing things on a global scale (ending war and poverty, creating a sustainable and just world) – it’s just so overwhelming, which is how the bomb drawings ended up making me feel depressed and powerless. Working in Hiroshima, I was at one of the bomb-

sites in my previous book and it was not an image, not a map, not an impossibility, but a very real place filled with people. To stand at the hypocenter and rub a black crayon over Japanese paper placed on the sidewalk is to witness and record the horrific, and yes, criminal, event of the US dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, but also a trace of the passing of time, the rebuilding of an entire city, the way society chooses to mark and memorialize events, making what disappeared, appear.

In the bomb drawings, many of which are labor intensive, all done by hand, I employed a “modernist” approach, painting and drawing, to seduce the viewer in order for her to consider and reconsider what the US has done on such a massive scale. Rarely is such anti-war sentiment and political criticism embedded in colorful and relatively abstract work. While many of the bombings employed the most advanced technology and weapons and the war machine moves faster than a speeding bullet, it felt crucial to work slowly, to provide a



erin o'Hara slavick

complex visual space for the viewer to linger in. My work in Hiroshima employed processes that are significant to the specificity of Hiroshima's history: cyanotypes of A-bombed artifacts that conjure the white and black shadows left by incinerated people, plants and things; rubbings of A-bombed surfaces to symbolically absorb and actually trace some of the trauma – the rubbings are then used as paper negatives in the darkroom to make contact prints that resemble x-rays; and autoradiography – exposing x-rays to the lingering radiation in A-bombed objects and then contact printing the x-ray. It was through discovering exposed x-ray film in a vault after the A-bomb that the Japanese realized that it was indeed an atomic bomb.

And it was through a photographic experiment by Henri Becquerel in 1896, placing uranium salts on photographic plates and not exposing them to anything else, that it was proven that uranium emits invisible radiation.

I also felt deeply honored that the Peace Museum allowed me such generous access to the artifacts and assisted me greatly by taking time to bring me artifacts and help me expose the cyanotypes. They also allowed me to place A-bombed artifacts on x-ray film for 10 days in a completely dark room. It is hard for me to imagine the same professional and kind treatment of a Japanese artist in Washington DC trying to make work about the Enola Gay (the plane that dropped Little Boy on Hiroshima). I was also honored to be working with the same artifacts and in the same space as two of my favorite photographers, Hiromi Tsuchida and Ishiuchi Miyako.

JSC: *How did the opportunity to make these images come about?*

EOS: My husband, David Richardson, is an epidemiologist focusing on the effects of exposure to radiation on workers in nuclear weapon facilities and nuclear power plants all over the world. Most of the standards set regarding “acceptable exposure rates” are based on the deeply flawed A-bomb data that was based on the healthiest of cohorts – the survivors. It does not take into account the 140,000 people who died by the end of 1945 as a result of radiation from the A-bomb. Following in Dr. Alice Stewart's footsteps, he was trying to go to Hiroshima for quite a while to do research at RERF (Radiation Effects Research Foundation, originally the ABCC, Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, a compound built in 1947 by the US government to study, not treat – the victims of the A-bomb). Finally, he was invited and we went as a family, with our 2 young children, for 3 months in the summer of 2008. It was David's idea for me to try to make autoradiographs. Once in Hiroshima, rereading Carol Mavor's essay in my *Bomb After Bomb* book that focuses on Hiroshima, I realized I had to use cyanotypes. And I had planned to do the rubbings/contact photographs. The kids attended the International YMCA every day while I worked on the project that has just culminated in the book

After Hiroshima with an extraordinary essay by James Elkins (Daylight Books, 2013 – link please).

I must stress that there was no way I could have made much of this work without the cooperation and empathy of the people at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, especially the Director of the Peace Culture Foundation there, Steve Leeper.

JSC: *One of the techniques you used to create the images was autoradiography, where the radiation in the objects is captured on x-ray film and then reproduced. Can you talk a little bit about that technique, which exposes a strange link between the craft of photography and the nuclear project, and the images it yielded?*

EOS: Interestingly, photography and flight, photography and the military, photography and popular culture, for better and worse, are closely tied together. Alberto Santos-Dumont is whom much of the world considers to be the inventor of flight. On October 19, 1901, Santos-Dumont circled the spire of the Eiffel Tower in his innovative flying machine, making him the toast of Paris. With the onset of air combat, Santos-Dumont became depressed and killed himself in despair. His last words were, “I never thought that my invention would cause bloodshed between brothers. What have I done?”

We all know that photography has been used, by the police, government, journalists and citizens, to document prisoners, people about to be executed, victims, political opposition, scientific and military tests and for surveillance, evidence and testimony.

The single autoradiograph in the book *After Hiroshima* was made by placing a chunk of an A-bombed tree trunk on x-ray film for 10 days in light-tight conditions. It is not a very scientific experiment. The exposure registered on the x-ray film could be background radiation, but why were none of the other sheets of film exposed similarly? I call that image *Lingering Radiation* because in my opinion, no image would exist without the lingering radiation in that wood. Radiation is invisible. I want to make the invisible visible. Just as the increased lung cancer and childhood thyroid cancer rates rose after Three Mile Island, leukemia after Chernobyl and most likely many cancers after Fukushima, no one saw much, really. Statistics and numbers, even though they represent human beings and disease, tend to be abstract, misread, under-reported and not believed. I would like to think that photography and the photographers who practice it, work against the status quo of nuclear energy and atomic bombs, and some certainly have – Carol Gallagher's *American Ground Zero* for example – but photography, like the written word, functions on so many levels, some critical and ideological and others banal and relatively objective, school photos, snapshots, pornography, advertising, propaganda. Art (photography) is always hand in hand (in line with or against) with whatever social, cultural, political events are happening at the time of production and with the passing of time, Art (photography)

is seen through whatever socio-political lens of the present situation.

It does seem absolutely perverse to talk about the white and black shadows left by the instant incineration of people and plants and things as “photograms” (photographs made by placing things directly on the photo paper and exposing it to light like my cyanotypes and rubbings), but that is what they are. Unlike the objects placed on photo paper that are usually returned to the shelf or box, the incinerated people and plants and things are gone forever. That is what invisible radiation does – it poisons and disappears people. Photography preserves and archives, witnesses and testifies. It can make visible things we otherwise may not see.

JSC: *I was particularly struck by the cyanotypes. They seem to have an effect similar to Japanese calligraphy and woodblock prints from the early 19th century. Superficially, these appear to be simple, discreet images. But the more you look at them the more they reveal themselves, many of them almost seem to move. They are also quite beautiful. I almost felt ashamed at being drawn to them as aesthetic objects. I'm reminded of Norman Mailer's description of how beautiful a bomb looks from the air at the moment it explodes, like a rose blooming.*

EOS: This is the contradiction and ethical dilemma at the core of my project, but as Andre Breton said almost century ago, “Beauty will be convulsive or it will not be at all.” There is power in beauty. It is a deliberate device used by artists in many different ways to invite the viewer in, especially when the content is disturbing, controversial and violent. I too was struck by how “Japanese” some of the cyanotypes looked – eucalyptus bark like a Japanese character – and all of them an intense and varying indigo (cyan) blue – the type found in much of the clothing worn in 1945. And as I've said, they are unavoidably direct descendants of those terrible shadows of disappearance.

I was often asked about the use of beauty in the bomb drawings and the Hiroshima images are even more beautiful. I do not have a clear or simple response. It is very complicated, sensitive and problematic. But I know that my intentions are good and I think the weight of my commitment to a world without war can be felt somehow, perhaps through the combination of texts and image and in the context of my work as a whole, but also through the power of the images, of the objects and what they signify. Adorno said poetry could never be written after the holocaust but poetry continues to be written. I think we need every tool in the box to fight for what we believe in and what we are against and this includes beautiful art.

Harold Edgerton documented the atomic tests in the American Southwest and made mystifyingly stunning photographs that look like Odilon Redon drawings or illuminated marbles or magnified fish eyes, a phenomenon of light and power. Once you know what it is and how much damage it ultimately caused, it is hard to think of it as beautiful but on a

purely aesthetic level, it is astonishingly beautiful. However, I am of the belief that there is nothing that is purely aesthetic. Everything carries content, even aesthetics.

Howard Zinn writes about being a bomber pilot and how the pilot does not see the hell he has unleashed below. It is a 5-mile high view of a very distanced and foreign place. Not until one is on the ground does one see the destruction. In the case of Hiroshima, there was almost total annihilation that one can see in the aerial military photographs after the bombing. However, total destruction still does not show you the melting skin and the multitudes made blind, the rivers running red with blood and no medicine to treat the victims so they rub ground bone ash into their open wounds. There must be something utterly and fundamentally seductive about war and the military or there would not be so many willing soldiers and workers on the war machine's assembly line.

I felt (and still feel) a lot of shame and guilt over Hiroshima as an American. My taxes still go towards the military that rains down poisons and bombs in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and we are all responsible for that, at least in part. While I was not born until 1965, 20 years after Little Boy instantly destroyed 70,000 lives and the city of Hiroshima, I still feel the need to “right history,” to apologize, make the peace, however small the gesture seems.

JSC: *The title of your book is After Hiroshima. But the sense I got from viewing the extraordinary images is that there really is no “after” Hiroshima. That Hiroshima is always with us and will always be with us, exploding over and over again. Where you surprised when you viewed your own images by the radioactive traces of the bombing?*

EOS: Actually, yes, I was surprised by my own work as I made it appear. As the first cyanotype appeared in the bathtub rinse of water – the Eucalyptus Bark seen above – I cried. I could not believe the image I had made was of bark from an A-bombed tree near Hiroshima Castle (rebuilt after the bombing) and that the image was appearing in the dormitory where many military personnel, scientists and doctors once lived during their research at RERF. It felt subversive and covert, transformative and powerful.

And yes again to your observation that there is no real “after” Hiroshima, in the sense that it is over (as modernism is folded into post-modernism) just as there is no way to be in the time before Hiroshima. We are all living in a nuclear world. It will always be after Hiroshima. I write about the idea of after in the book, *After Hiroshima* is made after the poetry that should never have been written after the holocaust; after everything that has been said and done in response to Hiroshima; not in imitation of; not in a post-modern sense of appropriation or beyond; in honor of Hiroshima and the people who disappeared and survived; against forgetting; as evidence, traces of the aftermath. There is no way to be in the time before Hiroshima.”

JSC: *We hear a lot about American exceptionalism these*

days, usually from cheerleaders for the empire. Surely, one of the most malign applications of this concept is as a defense for the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To this day, we hear from US war strategists and nuclear apologists that these two horrific acts were necessary to bring the war to an early end and save both American and Japanese lives. Your thoughts?

EOS: I was once almost unable to continue giving a lecture on my bomb drawings at the North Carolina Museum of Art because a man in the audience kept claiming, very loudly, that if “we hadn’t dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, millions more Americans would have been killed.” Even “experts” who once said that have recanted that claim. The Japanese were about to surrender. The US government/military industrial complex wanted to drop the bombs to test them, to see what would happen, to use the product of so many expenditures and research and labor hours. The Japanese people were like lab mice to the American people making the decision. The fact that the US interned American citizens of Japanese descent during the war is a strong indication that the US did not see the Japanese people as fully human. (The question has been asked before, why did the US not use the bomb against Hitler?)

I do not think any bombing leads to more peace. Any and all bombings lead to widows, orphans, a poisoned land, a vengeful population and more war. War leads to more war, every time, continuously. The exceptionalism of the US is frightening. I hate to say this and I’ve said it before, but I truly think that many Americans believe that an American life is worth more than any other nationally identified life.

JSC: *The nuclear weapons industry and the nuclear power industry have always been symbiotically linked. The Japanese have suffered more grievously than any other people from the nuclear beast. I’ve always been mystified by the how enthusiastically the Japanese government and industry embraced nuclear power. Even in the wake of Fukushima, the government seems reluctant to shutter its nuclear plants. I’ve tended to think that there was a Freudian explanation: that we are subconsciously drawn to the things that we are most frightened by. We now have a major documentary film, titled Pandora, which is getting a lot of hype for promoting nuclear power as the last hedge against global warming. Is there any kind of role for what Edward Teller used to call “atoms for peace?”*

EOS: I think it is important to make a distinction between the government and the people (both here and there). Since Fukushima, there has been an enormous gain in the anti-nuclear movement in Japan. Needless to say, the government is in denial and has acted despicably in response to Fukushima. When I was last there in 2011, after Fukushima, no one had air conditioners running even though it was stifling hot, in order to save energy. (Businesses would turn them on when I walked through the door.) Nuclear weapons could not be made without the nuclear power industry. “Atoms for peace”? No. The risk is too great and eternal. Solar power is a better

hedge against global warming and does not come with the gigantic risk and threat of a nuclear accident.

JSC: *The Japanese government appears to be becoming more bellicose by the week. There seems to be a nostalgia for the militaristic posture of the old Empire. Did you sense any of this while you were in Japan? Is this a longing that is shared by Japanese citizens?*

EOS: I do not speak any Japanese so I could not read the mood or political leanings of “the people”. All of the Japanese people I spoke with, in English, were adamantly anti-nuclear, anti-war, pro-peace, pro-diplomacy, and most of them were working very hard within and outside of institutions to bring about positive change.

JSC: *I find much contemporary art tedious, self-conscious, imitative, apolitical and poorly crafted. Yet, you seem to pushing against the current. Your images are aggressively political and exquisitely made. Is there space for a political artist in a culture that seems to value only art as commodity?*

EOS: I also find much contemporary art tedious and poorly crafted, not to mention superficial, empty of meaning and purpose. Much of it plays the game of the capitalist art market. I have never been interested in art for art’s sake or art made primarily made for the market. That said, there are amazing and political contemporary artists who are quite successful – Alfredo Jaar, Hans Haacke, Doris Salcedo, Ischiuchi Miyako, Sue Coe, Thomas Hirschhorn, Mark Dion, Andrea Bowers, Jane Marsching, Brendon Ballengee, to name a few. Yes there is space for us, and there always has been. The Dadaists raged against the machine. Hieronymus Bosch was in a world of his own. Unfortunately art is treated and understood as a commodity much of the time, but there are many artists who do not consider the art market or their art as a commodity while they make it. I am 47 years old and have shown my work all over the world, mostly in non-profit, alternative spaces and a couple museums. I have just landed my first solo show at a commercial gallery – Cohen Gallery, September 19 – November 2 in Los Angeles, CA – and I feel as if I can check off one of my life’s goals, that I have reached “success,” in the traditional sense. And maybe I have, but the show I had in the A-bombed bank in Hiroshima last year was one of the most intense and satisfying experiences I have ever had. If our culture only values art as a commodity, then we have to work and fight to change that by making work that transcends the art market, functions outside of it and acknowledges its position. **CP**

CULTURE & REVIEWS

Human Rights and Copy Wrongs

BY LEE BALLINGER

Throughout most of human history, music has been free. Over the past century and a half, the advance of technology has allowed music to be turned into various configurations that could be sold. Now the further advance of technology is pushing music back toward its original, free state.

The advance of technology has been accompanied by massive conflicts over copyright, a war over music and ownership and money with battlefronts in the courts, Congress, and the streets.

Webster's defines copyright as "the exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute the matter and form of something (as a literary, musical, or artistic work)." The U.S. Constitution says the purpose of copyright is: "to promote the Progress of Science and useful arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries."

Alex Sayf Cummings steps up as war correspondent in his excellent new book, *Democracy of Sound: Music Piracy and the Remaking of Copyright in the Twentieth Century* (Random House, \$27), a fascinating history of unauthorized reproduction from wax cylinders to digital files.

Cummings makes clear that copyright, unlike its dictionary and Constitutional definitions, has actually always been an elastic concept which has "been the creature of shifting political interests and cultural aspirations – always incomplete, always subject to change." One reason that's true is because of the ways that the technology of music distribution runs ahead of attempts to control it. Cummings

tells the story of how publishers tried to stop churches from sharing the sheet music that was produced by new forms of printing and how Thomas Edison's invention of a playable disc ultimately resulted in record companies trying to keep records from being played on the radio. The bootlegging of music expanded with the post-World War II advent of magnetic tape that allowed music to be recorded anywhere, from radio stations to private homes. Yet the record industry didn't get around to having Congress give it a copyright for its products until 1971.

The rise of the Internet eventually led the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) to launch an ongoing avalanche of lawsuits against music fans who allegedly had traded music files. This was and is nothing but a con game. The Internet was developed entirely with public money – the taxes of the very people who download music. The infrastructure and all of the key initial software came out of public institutions. Ironically, the Internet was created for the specific purpose of trading files. In 1995 the Internet was handed over to commercial interests with the blessing of the Clinton administration. In the wake of this hijacking, the major record labels asserted their right to control the flow of music online by right of ownership, ownership which they, at best, coerced out of the hands of its creators. Now they use the Internet we paid for to spy on us in order to be able to persecute us.

This is completely backwards. The music industry should have to pay a royalty into the public treasury for its use of the Internet to promote and sell music. They could use the money they've bullied music fans into paying them for the "crime" of sharing music. It's been quite profitable. For example, they sued students at Rensselaer

Polytechnic for \$98 billion each and then settled for \$15,000 apiece. There's plenty of money in the RIAA till since not one penny of the tens of millions of dollars they've extorted from music fans has gone to artists.

Betsy Sherman, while working for Warners searching the Internet for music web sites to bust, told Rolling Stone that people should pay for music because "that's how we interpret having respect for things, isn't it? That we pay for them?" Does she mean that buying slaves meant that the owner had respect for them? Or that if I download music for free by Miles Davis or Metallica that I don't have respect for them?

Edgar Bronfman, the head of Warners Music Group from 2004 to 2012, would probably agree that his children have no respect for music. When he was asked by Reuters if any of his seven kids "stole" music, he replied "I'm fairly certain that they have, and I'm fairly certain that they've suffered the consequences. A bright line around moral responsibility is very important."

It took quite a bit of dexterity for Bronfman to clamber up to the moral perch from which he slanders as thieves not only his own children, but the hundreds of millions of people worldwide who download music without paying for it. The Bronfman family fortune, which allowed young Edgar to buy his way into the music business in the first place, came from running booze during Prohibition (i.e. it was illegal). Companies headed by Bronfman have faced legal sanction for fixing CD prices and for paying bribes to radio stations in return for airplay. The only consequence he has suffered is to see his net worth soar to over two and a half billion dollars.

The RIAA also attempts to dance the moral mambo with its claims that sharing music is the cause of "a drop in CD sales, thousands of layoffs at record companies, and huge declines in royalty income for artists, songwriters, and producers." Yet in 2003, with file-

sharing persecution in full swing, a U.S. District Court found that record clubs owned by BMG and Sony had failed to pay an estimated \$100 million in artist royalties. Cheating artists remains the financial bedrock of the music industry.

Meanwhile, poor consumers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (or, say, Greece, with its 27% unemployment rate) may not have a computer for downloading or the money to buy a made-in-America CD, so they buy a pirated CD at up to 90 per cent off.

Similarly, in the United States where computer access and portable digital hardware are common not just on campus but in poor neighborhoods as well, music often floats from one set of ears to another without money changing hands.

Everywhere, from Chattanooga to Cairo, the driving force behind the free sharing of music is poverty. As Steve Morris, an American University student, told the Washington Post: "We don't care. CDs are so expensive and we're so poor."

The US government, which so casually gave away the Internet in a precursor to the current tidal wave of privatization, has made laws to guarantee the corporate control of cyberspace.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), which was passed unanimously in the U.S. Senate in 1998 and signed into law by Bill Clinton, gutted fair use. In addition, for the first time it became illegal to share music online even if no money changes hands.

Compare this to the Bill of Rights. Under the Fourth Amendment police must show probable cause that a crime has been committed before they can get a judge's permission to search your home for evidence or to subpoena you to appear in court.

Under the DMCA, all the RIAA has to do is to file paperwork with a court clerk to get a subpoena if it suspects you of downloading music from the Internet. The NSA has nothing on the RIAA, which helped to pioneer the massive searching of databases filled

with personal information about our music choices.

The DMCA is part of the growing police state and it is a law which inherently encourages abuse, abuse which can be deadly. In 2003, African immigrant Ousane Zongo was shot dead by police in New York after being wrongly suspected of hiding pirate CDs in a Chelsea storage locker.

The undercover cops who took his life were on the scene doing the dirty work of the music industry, which should share in their guilt. Which wasn't much – NYPD officer Bryan A. Conroy was sentenced to five years' probation and 500 hours of community service.

This abuse takes many forms. I frequently get promotional CDs from record companies with no information about the music but lots of threatening legalese which makes it clear that I am presumed guilty of some crime as defined by the RIAA. None of us are safe.

The music industry's phony moralizing is designed not just to put a fig leaf over their greed but also to drive a wedge between musicians and fans.

Sometimes it works.

Metallica sued Napster for \$10 million for allowing the band's music to be shared and successfully demanded that over 300,000 Napster users who had traded Metallica music files be banned from the service. Not bothering with the courts, when rapper Joseph "Run" Simmons of Run-DMC found sidewalk pirates selling copies of Back from Hell before it was released he confiscated the merchandise.

But most musicians are looking for ways to share their music, which record companies have prevented them from doing on many occasions. Southside Johnny explains the position many artists are in: "The record companies own all the masters of my albums. They are called catalogue. The more catalogue a company has the greater its assets and the greater amount of money it can borrow from the banks

at a friendly rate. My records are just part of the vast catalogues of a number of companies. They don't release them because they don't think they can sell enough of them to make any profit. But they won't sell them back to me because they want both the catalogue power and the tax writeoff for inventory. I encourage you to burn copies for anyone who really wants a CD."

The needs of fans and musicians are fundamentally the same. The real wedge is between both of them and the music industry. At the Congressional Napster hearings Roger McGuinn revealed that although as a member of the Byrds he recorded several Top Ten songs, he had never received a royalty check in his life. At the 2002 Los Angeles hearing of the California Senate Select Committee on the Entertainment Industry, Backstreet Boy Kevin Richardson testified that he had never received a royalty check. A member of the Olympics explained that although the group's 1960 hit, "Hully Gully," had appeared on 94 different compilations worldwide, he had never received any royalties.

Don Henley of the Eagles, despite a threat by the RIAA to sue any artists who shared information with the committee, presented a copy of his most recent royalty statement which showed an \$87,000 deduction for free goods in Europe even though Henley's contract called for no free goods in Europe.

The beat goes on today. David Lowery of Camper Van Beethoven says that "My song got played on Pandora one million times and all I got as a songwriter was \$16.89."

It's not just musicians who are being ripped off, but fans as well. In 2002, the record industry cartel reached a settlement of a price-fixing case brought against it by 42 states. It cost them \$67 million in cash, a drop in the bucket compared to the money they gouged out of consumers by jointly conspiring to sell CDs and tapes at identical high prices or to the money saved by not paying royalties to artists.

One reason artists are freaked out about fans freely sharing music is the high cost of their health care. One reason fans need file-sharing is to eliminate one expense in their lives in case they get sick.

Several years ago, a group of rock stars gathered in Sacramento to lobby the California legislature to change contract law to prevent recording artists from having, legally speaking, less freedom than indentured servants. But according to a union official who was present at a pre-hearing meeting, the main thing the musicians there discussed was health care, especially the lack of it. Health care for themselves, their sidemen, their parents, their siblings. There are over one thousand musician-for-musician health care benefits in the United States every week, all of them supported by music fans who themselves may not have health insurance. Yet all the executives at the corporations which make up the RIAA get fully paid health care, paid for by revenues generated solely by artists.

But even if you toe the music industry line and pay for your music, you still don't own it. Sales of digital music are considered to be licenses, not possessions. This gives consumers little or no ability to (legally) share the music they've bought. Similarly, only a handful of superstar artists own the music they have so painstakingly recorded.

Musicians are forced to go deep into debt to the record company in order to be able to make their records. It's written into their contracts as part of the price they must pay to go into the studio.

The way that the love of music is turned by industry lawyers into a broken heart is epitomized by the situation that was faced by Andy Jordan, unemployed at the time his son was sued for downloading music. Jordan, a record collector, told *Rolling Stone*: "The first single I ever bought was 'Monster Mash,' on Garpax Records. Garpax was bought by Parrot Records,

which in turn was bought by Warner Music Group. Which is now suing my son."

The role of the artist is to make music. The role of the fan is to support the artists and the music they create, sometimes by buying a concert ticket or CD, sometimes by sharing their passion by word of mouth or mouse click. But what about the music industry? They serve no useful purpose and get in the way of our need to bathe in the healing waters of music. Our brains are specifically hard-wired to embrace music, just as other parts of our brain tell us when we need food and water. Music is something we've got to have. Why should corporations and bondholders be allowed to keep it from us?

While the file-sharing wars may have faded from the headlines in recent years, the copyright cops are still hard at work. Last month the RIAA filed lawsuits against 762 alleged file sharers, once again saying they are doing it to save jobs and funnel money to artists.

In a 2004 *Billboard* commentary, Todd Rundgren dismissed the RIAA as a "gang of ignorant thugs" and added that "It's time to let the monolith of commoditized music collapse."

It is, of course, already collapsing as every advance of technology has moved us closer to Alex Sayf Cummings' "democracy of sound." This democracy involves giving us a choice in where we hear music – the invention of the transistor allowed for shirt pocket, portable radios just as tape players in our cars turned daily driving from sheer drudgery into an uplifting concert experience of our own choosing.

The microchip and advanced digital technology now allows us to go from consumer to active participant. We are free to champion and share any music we like, not just the deliberately narrow range of sounds that the music industry shoves down our throats.

This democracy is now economic as well, since you can give someone music and still keep it for yourself. The steam-

rolling momentum of musical democracy has brought forth a totalitarian response from the music industry and the politicians it purchases off the rack. They are determined to turn back the clock to the time when they made all the choices and had complete control.

In 1997, then-RIAA CEO Hilary Rosen wrote in *Billboard*: "Until the appropriate balance between free-flowing information and intellectual property is struck, the Internet can never achieve its potential to become a viable medium for the sale of music." Leaving aside Rosen's self-serving definition of the purpose of the Internet (at the time she was buying a \$2.5 million home in the D.C. suburbs), there will never be an appropriate balance between "free-flowing information and intellectual property." The two are incompatible. They are at war.

There are only two choices. We can run for protection into the arms of an obsolete, corrupt music industry that, through high prices, payola, censorship, and narrow artist rosters keeps us from hearing most of the music made on our planet.

Or we can embrace, with open arms, the new technology and its potential to make all the music available to all the people all the time.

"Copyright interests in the late twentieth century," Cummings writes, "supposed that people should not learn, feel, or experience any expression without money changing hands. Pirates suggested otherwise."

But "piracy" is only the beginning. We should envision a world beyond copyright because the world which gave birth to copyright no longer exists. I say that as someone who owns hundreds of copyrights. In fact, I assume that this very article will be "stolen" and shared. I certainly hope so. **CP**

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