

# CounterPunch

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN AND JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

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***“The Most Destructive and Murderous Act of Aggression of the post-World War II period”***

**Remembering the U.S. Attack on Vietnam**

**Fifty Years Ago**

**By Jean Bricmont**

Noam Chomsky has pointed out that this year we are failing to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of what he calls “President John F. Kennedy’s decision to launch the most destructive and murderous act of aggression of the post-World War II period: the invasion of South Vietnam...” Indeed, it was in 1962 that U.S. armed forces began to bomb South Vietnam, but this is a non-event in the public consciousness of the West. The Battle of Dien Bien Phu and the 1954 Geneva Accords had put an end to the French war to restore their colonial rule in Indochina. The Accords promised to reunite the country through democratic elections. Since it seemed clear that the party of Ho Chi Minh would win those elections, the Eisenhower administration refused to allow them to be held, and installed an unpopular anti-communist government in South Vietnam, which by 1962 was totally discredited and risked collapsing in the face of an internal insurrection.

The standard U.S. history of the Vietnam War begins only in 1964-1965, with the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the start of U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. This serves to maintain the American myth that it was “defending”

***20 million with incomes below half the poverty line; Six million living only on food stamps; 46 Million Sunk in Total Desperation; Can Anything Be Done in Today’s Brutal Environment?***

## Deep Poverty in America Today

Laura Flanders Talks to Peter Edelman

“Welfare Limits Left Poor Adrift as Recession Hit” – declared the *New York Times* on April 7. A simpler headline would have been, “Peter Edelman Was Right.” Edelman, a law professor at Georgetown University, was the most prominent of only three officials of the Clinton administration who resigned to protest the welfare “reform” law of 1996. He argued from the start that leaving poverty reduction to the states and doing nothing about jobs would fuel a race to the bottom in poverty and wages. That’s exactly what’s happened.

The latest news on jobs is that with no big employment spurt in sight and tougher new qualification requirements on the books, unemployment checks are stopping early this June for hundreds of thousands of people who’ve been out of work for longer than a year. They’ll join the 5 million who are already jobless and without benefits.

What Edelman adds to this grim picture is that even those with jobs are in a fix. More than half of all the jobs in the U.S.A. today pay less than \$34,000; a quarter pay less than \$22,000, the poverty line for a family of four. A job is no guarantee of escaping poverty and yet, for many of the poor, there is literally no help. Heading into 2008, wel-

fare caseloads were at their lowest level in two generations and they’ve barely risen since. Indeed, far from expanding services to help the newly needy, many states kept cutting back. As Edelman reports, in Wyoming in 2010, “318 families, 644 people in the entire state, were on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), just four per cent of poor children. In nineteen states less than ten per cent of the children are receiving TANF – it’s gone.”

It’s not just our social safety net that’s not functioning – it’s our society.

Edelman is soft-spoken, clear and clearly feeling urgent. “I used to believe,” he writes, “that the debate over wealth distribution should be conducted separately from the poverty debate, in order to minimize the attacks on anti-poverty advocates for engaging in ‘class warfare.’ But now we literally cannot afford to separate the two issues. The economic and political power of those at the top is not only eroding our democracy but also making it virtually impossible to find the resources to do more at the bottom. Nor is the issue merely about those at the bottom: today’s inequality hurts a substantial majority of Americans.”

I interviewed Paul Edelman on May 22, in New York, about his new book, *So Rich, So Poor, Why It’s So Hard to End*

*Poverty in America* (The New Press, May 29, 2012).

**LF:** *There are statistics that any reader of this book will leave with, that I think you want us to leave with, namely, more than half of all the jobs in the U.S. today pay less than \$34,000 and a quarter pay less than \$22,000 a year. Can you put some flesh on those numbers?*

**PE:** There are two different points there. One is how much low-wage work we have in this country. It's really astonishing. And the other is that there are 6 million people whose only income is food stamps. [That's one-third of the poverty line.] There's one more number that goes along with that, and that's the 20 million with incomes below half the poverty line. That's \$9,000 for a family of three. Those are interconnected because they all relate to how the economy has functioned for people.

You have to start the story in the early 1970s in terms of what we all know. The good jobs, the manufacturing jobs, went away and they were replaced by very low-wage jobs. I don't think we paid enough attention to that. Along with that, there was the increase of women who were coping by themselves, having children by themselves. There's a lot to be said about what that's all about, but

one thing that certain is that with all that low-wage work, it's very, very hard for a woman who's bringing up kids alone to have enough to live on.

*How is someone who is only getting by on food stamps actually living?*

One way or another, you can't survive on that. Something's got to give. The numbers of the homeless are up, the numbers of moms with children who are homeless are up. If there is a family network people can cope better, if they

**There are 6 million people whose only income is food stamps. That's one-third of the poverty line. There's one more number that goes along with that, and that's the 20 million with incomes below half the poverty line. That's \$9,000 for a family of three.**

have some kind of help with housing, but basically you have these millions of people – we honestly don't know how they are surviving. In terms of the extremely poor – that 20 million – they're disproportionately in the South, they're rural, they're disproportionately African American, to some extent Latino, some are farmworker families, people on Indian reservations. There are significant numbers who are going in and out of deep poverty. They're not going out of poverty. When they get out of deep poverty, they're still poor. Some of the dip isn't permanent, but how would we stand for the fact that anybody has an income that goes below half the poverty line for a minute? But we do!

*Why are Americans generally unaware of the extent of low-wage work? Why isn't this better understood?*

The people who have low-wage jobs certainly know how hard their life is, but somehow – and I don't honestly

know exactly why – they don't see themselves as being in the same boat with 103 million other people. Many of them see themselves as having failed in an individual way rather than being one of millions caught in a structural failure, or they see themselves as part of a situation that no one can fix. They don't see the big picture, or they have a sense of the big picture and think it's insoluble.

*When you were an advisor to Robert F. Kennedy in 1960s, what did you think the future was going to bring?*

I think I assumed that we were headed in the right direction as a country on all of this. In the 1960s – for a variety of reasons, partly the programs, partly the hot economy, partly the result of civil rights – there was a large increase in employment especially in state and city government of African Americans. Unemployment went way down. I think we often have a view that the future is like the present, and a lot of the time it isn't. I thought we were on the right track.

I had a chance to meet Paul Fusco, the photographer who accompanied RFK's funeral train. Thousands of people came to pay their respects at the side of the track. Those interviewed afterward said they felt the country was at a turning point. They hoped but also feared ... Talk about what's changed. How did the food-stamp program pass then, for example, and would it pass today?

Food stamps were a great social policy success. When we hear from the Right that nothing works, that program is one of the many things that worked. The policies that we have in place nationally that relate to poverty are keeping 40 million people out of poverty. Forty million more than the 46 million we have right now would be poor if not for food stamps. Forty million are out of poverty thanks to programs. Forty-six million are still poor because of all the low-wage jobs.

How did food stamps get passed? Robert Kennedy went to Mississippi where he saw children who were very hungry, and he came home determined to do something about it. His children will tell you, in their family it was expected that you would do something to make this a better world. At dinner that night, he pointed his finger at them and said, "You have to do something."

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He died a little more than a year after that, but it did start something. The country was moved, was shamed. It was a time, as with the civil rights movement, when national TV made a difference in getting the country to react. Daniel Schorr was there and covered that day [in Mississippi], and it was on TV that night. George McGovern picked up the mantle and chaired a special committee. CBS made a documentary called *Hunger USA* that was very, very powerful. There was a citizens' commission on poverty that the Field Foundation funded. Doctors went down to Mississippi and did examinations of hundreds of kids and found just shocking amounts of pernicious anemia, rickets, miasmas, kwashi-orkor.

Richard Nixon was the first president to send a message to Congress, asking that food stamps be made into a national program. George McGovern and the Field hearings that he had made a big difference ... By the late '70s we had the program we have now. It's serving 46 million people today. At the beginning of the recession it was serving 26.3 million, that's almost 20 million more people over the course of four years or so, making a huge difference in keeping people from even deeper trouble.

*Do you think the food-stamp program would pass today?*

Right now I don't know what would pass that would be helpful to anybody. But when President Obama was elected, in the first two years, we passed a healthcare bill that has Medicaid reaching 16 million more adults from age 18-64 who were not [previously] covered under Medicaid. We'd never been able to do that from 1965 on. Race to the Top – we can argue about the specifics of the policies, but it's a serious effort of national policy to improve education for low-income kids; The Recovery Act had well over \$150 billion in it for low-income people – a very serious effort in commitment to deal with poverty, even if they didn't say it out loud.

Could it happen now? George W. Bush liked food stamps. He had a deputy secretary of agriculture named Eric Bost who was terrific. Under Bush, the program was expanded, and states were given bonuses for enrolling more people. Right now we have Paul Ryan, and Paul

Ryan is a threat to this country.

*How serious is the threat to the food-stamp program right now?*

As long as they can't get 60 votes in the Senate, I think food stamps itself will be alright, but it's part of a larger effort to make us fight about this, so we don't have to fight about that. Even if they're not going to succeed on this, they're still going to draw our attention to it. To demonize the program. They're trying

**“There were problems from the beginning, but they were kind of masked. The president had put Democrats in a position where many people voted for it [Clinton’s “welfare reform”] who knew better but were stuck with it and they had to say it’s a big success and they still say that...”**

to say food stamps are the new welfare. I thought it was a program about keeping people from being hungry. Well, they want to turn it into a block grant [to the states, as happened with welfare]. But the overall effort is to dismantle as much as they can ...

Let's talk about Clinton's "welfare reform." I went down to eastern North Carolina soon after reform. The program was now operating along state, not federal guidelines. In the poorest parts, the former plantation lands, the new program was basically being administered by the old agents of the segregated South, people local African Americans recognized as former members of the Klan. Suffice to say, not a lot of applications for the new welfare program were being approved. Talk about other unexpected consequences of the end of guaranteed federal welfare.

I want to say I anticipated them! Obviously, in terms of it being useless in a recession (as it's turned out to be), that's taken 16 years to come to pass, but

the fact is that "welfare reform" wasn't good from the beginning. Women did find jobs in significant numbers (the economy was very, very hot); the Earned Income Tax Credit was helpful in adding to the wages of low-wage jobs, and so you did get the number of women who were working up from 49 per cent up to 64 per cent in 2000. It's back down to 54 per cent in 2009. But from 1997 on, 47 per cent of people who went off welfare did not get a job.

There were problems from the beginning, but they were kind of masked. The president had put Democrats in a position where many people voted for it who knew better but were stuck with it, and they had to say it's a big success and they still say that ...

To get to where we are now. This goes back to the 6 million with only food stamps, because, if you were going to have a decent safety net – even modestly decent – you have food stamps and you have to have cash assistance. If we just had that, in combination, in most states people would not be in deep poverty. Although in some states (like Mississippi), even if you have both food stamps and welfare, you have incomes at 40 per cent of poverty line. In MS they have about 10 or 11 per cent of poor children getting welfare. In Wyoming, in 2010, 644 people in the entire state were on TANF – just four per cent of poor children. In nineteen states less than ten per cent of the children are receiving TANF – it's gone. And yet you still have these politicians saying too many people are on welfare. Show me!

When you have 4 million people left on welfare in the middle of a recession, it means people are getting rejected at the welfare office, or not even bothering to go. Notice the difference between welfare and food stamps. Food stamps went from 26.3 to 46 million because there's a legal right to have it. Welfare went from 3.9 million to 4.4 million, because there's no legal right to have it.

You write about unmarried moms. We've had many years of people talking about "out of wedlock birth." (Personally, I think people should be unlocked when they're giving birth!) We've had blaming the women, blaming the men, and blaming marriage and threats to marriage. Where do you put responsibility? First, who are these women? We know that unmarried births have gone up

all over the world among people of all races. We also know factually in African-American community 70 per cent of births are to women who aren't married. The trends in terms of birth rates have been more increases of unmarried births among whites and Hispanics than among African Americans, but it is troubling. How do you talk about that? The right-wing way of taking about it is they ought to get married. You have to ask yourself, whom are they going to marry? With what the criminal justice system has been doing to African-American men, who's out there to get married to?

There's a lot of community responsibility that is not being exercised in terms of what goes on in school, in the faith community, in a variety of ways, to promote women not to have babies until they're somewhat older. In this economy, just having a second wage earner in the household makes a huge difference to survival. You don't want to just go out and get somebody, but it is complicated. I worry that people on our side don't talk about the personal responsibility. Still, that's only part of it. You're functioning in this economy where it's so hard to earn enough money. If there were more op-

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portunities and better schools, we'd have a better chance of people growing up to a life of possibility, and I promise you we wouldn't have the same kinds of issues about this.

*Did we think differently as a nation about poverty in the New Deal, when it was mostly working-class white men who were going to benefit from poverty reduction? The New Society had different challenges – thanks to the women's movement and civil rights, it was going to help a whole lot of people of color and women ...*

I take your point ... I think this conversation should be driven by the eco-

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nomics facts ... We can say what we like about the individual, personal side (and I do talk about it), but fundamentally what we don't deal with – whether there are class attitudes or not – is the fact that half the jobs in this country pay less than \$34,000 a year. The minimum wage since 1973 has gone up by a grand total of seven per cent – in almost 40 years! That's less than a fifth of a percent a year. People have been stuck. And what that causes is a lot of anger. A lot of anger of this recession is built-up anger, finally coming home to roost when the recession hits so many people.

*In the book, you talk about the price we pay for not doing something now, not turning this ship around. What do you say to those of tremendous wealth who've done well in this period, who say they're happy in their gated communities ... Why should they worry about the poor?*

I say they ought to pay some taxes.

*What if they don't respond to "ought-to" questions?*

Well, maybe we could legislate it, but not now ... We're not going to solve the problem by having Warren Buffet pay as much taxes as his secretary, by the way. It has to be structural. We really need change, on the revenue side, to get the money that we should be getting from people and corporations and those who are hiding their income overseas; and on the expenditure side ...

Paul Ryan – not only does he want to slash all these programs one after the other, food stamps, TANF, Earned Income Tax Credit, but he wants to raise the defense budget in violation of the disastrous debt agreement last year, and he wants to cut rich people's taxes more. That's outrageous.

I guess what I say is I don't think this is personal. It's about paying your fair share.

Part of the explanation in my mind is that we don't know each other across class divides. We live in societies that are segregated in new ways. When it comes to creating communities that are more diverse in terms of income – what works?

I don't know that we're going to bring down the gates on any gated communities, but there are examples of cities and suburbs where there are diverse communities. Hope 6 as a housing program was complicated: it was enacted in the Bush years and involved demolishing public housing and rebuilding communities resembling "new town" type communities. It lost us something like a million affordable housing units. That wasn't good. But you can go around the country and find neighborhoods in many, many cities where, after they rebuilt, they're mixed income and they're successful. Primarily, it was intentionality of pricing that made it possible for lower income people to be in those neighborhoods, and they're doing fine. It can be done.

The real worry about poverty beyond everything we've talked about is concentrated poverty. That's where it's really hard to figure out how to change. There are so many factors working exponentially: the schools are awful, there's the cradle to prison pipeline, and there are not a lot of ways for people to get out of that sort of economic situation. Our biggest failure over 40 years – where we have not made progress – is on inner-city concentrated poverty and concentrated poverty in Appalachia, in the Mississippi Delta;

on Indian reservations, the *colonias* of South Texas.

*The partner of concentrated poverty is concentrated wealth and poverty. At the end of your book, you have good things to say about Occupy Wall Street and other things. You lift up the potential of people power to change things. I want to believe, but is people power really a match for concentrated wealth and influence? In this state of New York, our Democratic governor just said today that he's going to give up on passing a minimum wage raise this session. He said it's even more controversial than marriage equality. In the media, you have the Community Reinvestment Act blamed for the foreclosure debacle, and in the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Roberts calling school desegregation racist ... Is it really possible to turn this around?*

I think all of you ought to write to the governor and urge him to push back on the assembly. We need the state minimum wage to go up everywhere because the federal minimum wage is not going anywhere, anytime soon, and it's stuck at \$7.25. None of us can draw up a blue print, but it's about people doing as they did in the progressive era – when people got so sick and tired of the Robber Barons, they fought back and elected somebody different. I think it's going to take us a while to get out of this, but we can get out of it.

We have a lot of people in this country who care, and we would have a lot more if we could get public education out there. I think the middle and below the middle ought to be in play here. The basic idea that people still have is that it is going to be better for their children. That's the proclivity. But as long as they think they have more in common with the people above them than they do with those below, we're cooked.

*Can we grow out of this phase of corporate capitalism?*

I think there's a really big question about the future of our economy. We're in a global economy, and a lot of our future depends on what happens in China and India and other places. I've talked with people in various sorts of political places, and there're too many people whom I respect who say we're going to have this many or at least too many low-

wage jobs for a very long time. So, here's my sense of the remedies there. They're not about growing our way out completely – I think, we will get some growth – but recovery from the first G.W. Bush recession was anemic. We went through the first six years of his administration, and 6 million more people got to be poor because of the weakness of the economy largely. I really worry about the low wage.

So, answers ... Number one: [raise the] minimum wage. Number two: unions [need to be] stronger. Three: there are a whole bunch of work supports that are income equivalent – healthcare is worth something to the pocket book; childcare; help with housing; help with college. They are all public policies that a decent society ought to have. They are all worth something when it comes to helping people who are having a tough time. Still, with macroeconomic policy getting us as much growth as we can, there will still be a distributional question, and so, I think there needs to be a debate about wage supplements beyond the Earned Income Tax Credit.

*Employers who pay low wages are themselves making huge profits. With income supports isn't the public purse simply boosting private profits by subsidizing labor costs? What's an alternative?*

We don't want income supports that bail out big corporations from taking responsibility for paying their workers a proper wage. At the very least, the minimum wage and the Earned Income Tax Credit [EITC] need to be working in tandem. The minimum wage should be as high as we can make it without starting to destroy jobs, or at least as high as we can make it politically, which is a much lower number – maybe \$10 an hour now. The EITC shouldn't be taking the place of the minimum wage. Nor should we forget that a proper investment in health care, housing, childcare, and support for going to college has a monetary value that effectively adds to income. But if we do all of those things, I think there will still be a gap, and so, I think we have to talk about wage supplements. I don't especially like it, but I think it has to be on the table. **CP**

**Laura Flanders** is a frequent contributor to *CounterPunch*. A video excerpt of this conversation appears online at GRITtv.org

**BRICMONT** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

South Vietnam from the North, which ignores the refusal to hold the promised elections and the use of the U.S. Air Force to bomb the South starting in 1962.

Although forgotten, that 1962 intervention was the beginning of one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century and the worst since 1945. Three countries – Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos – were devastated for decades to come, millions of human lives were lost, even if no one knows exactly how many. In their “body counts,” the Americans applied the “mere gook rule”: if it's dead and slant-eyed, it's a Viet Cong, that is, a communist guerrilla. That way of counting had the advantage of playing down the number of civilian casualties.

When it comes to the Vietnamese, there is no Duty of Memory. No law punishes the massive revisionism that prevails in our culture regarding that non-event. There are no museums or statues to remind us of the millions of victims slaughtered or maimed in that conflict. There are no university chairs endowed to study that tragedy. Men who took part in those massacres or justify them are still welcomed by governments all around the world, without fear of being accused of “complicity” or “minimizing genocide.”

No “lesson of history” is drawn from the Vietnam War. Official lessons of history all echo the same theme: Munich, Munich, Munich. Lamentations over the weakness of democracies in the face of totalitarianism, meaning we must take up arms, or, rather, we must send bombers and drones against whatever country is in the clutches of a “new Hitler” to stop a “new Holocaust”: Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya already, Syria or Iran next. Even from a historical point of view, the discourse on Munich is inaccurate, but leave that aside. The point of the Munich discourse is to enable the left to rally to the Stars and Stripes in the name of anti-fascism.

Worse still, the tragedies which accompanied the end of that 30-year war (1945-1975), the boat people and the Khmer Rouge, were immediately used in the West – primarily by French “left intellectuals” – to initiate and justify the policy of intervention; although it is precisely the constant intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Vietnam that was the cause of those trag-

edies.

If “lessons of history” were really drawn from Vietnam, they would all point in the “wrong” direction – toward peace, disarmament, a bit of modesty in the West concerning Russia, China, Cuba, Iran, Syria or Venezuela. The exact opposite of the “lessons” of Munich and the Holocaust.

The Vietnamese were not victims of “symbolic domination” or “incitement to hatred,” but of massive bombing by fragmentation bombs, napalm, Agent Orange. They did not see themselves as victims, but as actors in their own destiny. They were led by one of the great political geniuses of history, Ho Chi Minh, accompanied by a military genius General Giap. They were not fighting for democracy but for national independence, an outdated notion in our “globalized” world. And they pursued that combat *against* the leading democracies, France and the United States.

And yet, the Vietnamese did not dispise our “values” (not a key word in that period), they did not hate the West, or science, or rationality, or modernity. They simply wanted to share the benefits freely. They were not particularly religious and did not reason in terms of identity, but of class. They constantly made the distinction between the American people and their leaders. That distinction was perhaps a simplification, but it enabled them to detach a part of the population from the country’s leaders in America itself.

The Vietnamese received no reparations for the suffering inflicted upon them. Nobody ever apologized for what had been done to them. They never insisted: they were content with their victory. They never demanded that an International Criminal Court judge their aggressors. At most, they politely requested cooperation in “healing the wounds of war,” which, of course, was contemptuously rejected. As the future Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter put it, “the destruction was mutual.” Indeed: some 50,000 dead on one side, several million on the other. One nation intact, the other in ruins.

The Vietnamese went from a form of socialism to a form of capitalism, causing dismayed revisions among certain of their Western supporters. But in Asia, capitalism and communism are words for something else. The real words are

national independence, development, catching up with (and soon passing) the West.

They were bitterly reproached for wanting to re-educate their captured enemies, those airmen from far away who bombed a population they thought to be defenseless. The attempt was no doubt naïve, but was it worse than assassinating them without trial or locking them up in Guantanamo?

They stood up to an indescribable barbarism, but, whatever the problems, they always asked to find a *political* and *negotiated* solution, words that our current human rights defenders indignantly refuse to hear.

Their combat was a vital contribution to the principal emancipation movement of the twentieth century, decolonization. It was also a sort of civilizing mission in reverse, by making part of

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Western youth aware of the extraordinary violence of our democracies in their relations with the rest of the world. By fighting for their national independence, the Vietnamese fought for all of humanity.

After 1968, that awareness gradually faded, dissolved in the ideology of human rights, in subjectivism and postmodernism, and in the ceaseless conflict of identities.

At a moment when our intervention policy is leading from disaster to chaos, amid calls for yet more intervention in Syria and Iran, it might be useful to remember that fateful decision of 1962, a mixture of imperial arrogance and belief in the irresistible power of high technology which plunged Southeast Asia into horror. When will we say, in regard to wars where we ourselves are the aggressors, “never again”? CP

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## **The Real Function of Socialism**

### **Is The Left a Right-Wing Conspiracy?**

**By Israel Shamir**

Kerry Bolton, *Revolution From Above: Manufacturing “Dissent” in the New World Order*, 250 pp., Arktos, U.K., 2011.

**T**he Left – including Communist Left – is manipulated by the super-rich in their own interests. These super-rich conspire to destroy tradition and create a collectivist world order of despotism under their own guidance, and the Left are “useful idiots” of these people greedy for power and money. This is the main thesis of a new book by Kerry Bolton, published by the traditionalist publisher Arktos (they also publish Evola and de Benoist). Bolton produces numbers and bank accounts (well, almost), trying to prove that feminism, communism, orange revolutions, gay movements and sundry forms of dissent are all sponsored by the oligarchs, Soros or Rockefeller.

This is the stuff the *Protocols* were made of: their authors claimed the Left, revolutionaries and dissidents were on the payroll of the bankers. However, the *Protocols* marked the Jews as the ultimate plotters and the Church as the victim, or the last defence. Not so in our case. Bolton has thoroughly secularised and sanitised his arguments. This book has no references to Jews or the Church (which is suspicious, for the author is a theologian), but it basically remained the same old-fashioned rightist screed.

Some of Bolton’s charges are justified up to a point, but his bias undermines his veracity. Granted, the Left’s war on family, church and tradition could contribute to success of the moneyed ones. But what about the Right? The capitalist Right destroys the essence of family, church and tradition, while upholding their names. The Left has a fling with Mammon now and then, but the Right is always in bed with Mammon. The wealthy guys spend some small change on the leftist dissidents, because they want to tame them, just as one throws morsels to stray dogs to keep them on friendly foot (or paw). The leftists often deserve rebuke, I agree,

but the rightists are even worse.

A traditionalist should not make this mistake. I have a soft spot toward the traditionalists and radical Conservatives, followers of Guenon, Evola or Dugin. They are anti-Mammon. They are so far right, that far-left can befriend them. They lost their battle in the 1930s, but regained some ground since then. Usually their political views are sound, whatever one thinks of their visions. Alain de Benoist's recent maxim would endear this right-winger to any true Leftist: "The main enemy is, on the economic level, capitalism and the market society; on the philosophical level, individualism; on the political front, universalism; on the social front, the bourgeoisie; and on the geopolitical front, America."

Bolton apparently is not aware that the world changed since 1870, or even 1903. Then, one could say that "socialism was used as the battering ram by the new rich to undermine the old ruling class ... and [to install] worship of Mammon as the meaning of life." Now, we have only Mammonites as the ruling class, and it is not fair to attack leftist dissidents for doing dirty jobs for the Mammonites, while giving a clean bill of health to the rightists who are the Mammonites.

Bolton's attack on Marxism suffers the same deficiency. He notes that "both Big Business and Marxism view history as dialectical," and for this reason capitalists support socialist movements. There is a better explanation: history, or rather historical process, is objectively dialectical, and capitalists spend money on some socialist activists because they want to subvert and control this dangerous movement.

He impossibly claims, "Marxists believe that socialism cannot emerge in a peasant society." Indeed, some Marxists had this view, but that was before Lenin, Mao, Castro, who are as much Marxists as anybody. Bolton remains stuck in the beginning of twentieth century. He approvingly quotes Spengler who said that "all radical parties necessarily become the tools of the Bourse... They attack tradition on behalf of the Bourse." Spengler wrote these lines before the Russian Revolution, which definitely attacked and destroyed the money power, but Bolton repeats that now.

Indeed, some radicals could be used as tools by money, but others, chiefly Communists, uprooted the Bourse alto-

gether. So much for the Bolton-Spengler contention that "there is no Communist movement that has not operated in the interests of money." It has now the same validity as Columbus' assertion that Cuba is a part of India.

Bolton dislikes Plato, for he was a collectivist and believed in some gender equality. This is a view of pro-market liberals who tell us that Plato is the father of totalitarianism. Thus Bolton fails two of de Benoist criteria at once.

Probably the most misleading and annoying part of Bolton's book is one dealing with the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution. Perhaps he copy-pasted it from a 1920s publication. Bolsheviks were set up by New York bankers who welcomed the Russian Revolution, according to Bolton. He quotes a congratulatory letter of Jacob Schiff, the banker,

**There are many conspiracies, big and small, there are many views and tendencies, and they can't be reduced to a single ill will.**

to the *NY Times* dated March 18, 1917, sharing "joy that the Russians have at last effected their deliverance from autocratic oppression through almost bloodless revolution."

Bolton is not even aware of the profound difference between the February Revolution 1917 (arranged by the Russian wealthy freemasons), which was applauded and hailed by the Western financiers, and the October Bolshevik Revolution that undid the February plot. He is not aware of Arnold Toynbee's assessment of Bolsheviks, which is almost identical to the traditionalist reading of the revolution, whether an older one by Pyotr Savitski, the founder of Eurasianism, or the new one by Alexander Dugin, the greatest traditionalist luminary. All of them considered Bolsheviks as true representatives of the Russian spirit meeting the Western challenge.

Bolton repeats the tales of the White émigrés of 1920s uncritically. He glorifies Admiral Kolchak, the self-appointed "Supreme Ruler" of Russia – but Kolchak came to Russia from the U.S. (like Trotsky) and has been sometimes considered an American agent. Bolton

speaks of dreadful Red terror and Red atrocities, but the Reds were better than the Whites toward the peasants and workers. Kolchak's troops were infamous for their atrocities and succeeded in antagonising the apolitical Siberians. The White troops shot industrial workers and hanged peasants for they were imbued with class hatred. Bolton writes approvingly even of Ataman Semyonov, who was an extremely cruel White commander.

Bolton condemns the U.S.A. for not doing enough in order to destroy the Bolsheviks right after the revolution. Well, Russia is a big country, and the U.S. was not keen to fight it right after fighting Germany. You do not have to be a hidden commie to be against an intervention, as we know on the lessons of Iraq and Iran. Bolton does not understand that it would not be an easy sell as the Reds were more popular than the Whites among the masses. A civil war is also a form of democracy, an extreme form, granted: people vote with their bullets instead of ballots. The Reds won in the civil war because the people preferred them, not because of support of some New York bankers.

After their victory, Bolsheviks did not sell their country to the named bankers. Other way around, they brought Russia to full economic independence. Bolton quotes Armand Hammer who said that "he never had any dealings with Stalin for ... he was not a man with whom you could do business. Stalin believed that the state was capable of running everything without the support of foreign concessionaires and private enterprise." Bolton also admits that Stalin refused to play ball with the Council for Foreign Relations and fit into the new world order, or even to discuss it. But was not Stalin an epitome of a Communist? One thinks that this admitted case would force Bolton to reconsider his main thesis, but it did not.

Bolton also refers to Grose, who wrote that the U.S.S.R. rejected all appeals to establish a World State, and that the Cold War was a real thing, "a genuine divide between globalists and the Soviet block," not a "conspiracy to fool the world." Fine! But afterward he reverses to his view that the Left is just a tool of the Capital ...

After thus dealing with the Russian Revolution, the author moves on to various dissident movements and at-

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tempts to prove they were set up by the super-rich. There is Marcuse, and feminists, and drugs, and rock-and-roll, and modern art, the Kinsey report, psychedelic revolution, sex and pornography, and Adorno, and Frankfurt School, and LSE, and NGOs, and NED – all these persons and movements were organised by a secret society of the very-rich Mammonites.

There is some truth in his accusations: money passed hands. However, there are much easier explanations than the deadly conspiracy of Kali Yuga adepts. In order to preserve capitalism, privilege and social inequality, the Western elites indeed try to distract the people, especially the rebellious and dynamic ones. Let them use drugs, drink beer, dance all night long, and make no meaningful changes or revolutions. Pseudo-left movements and pseudo-radical agendas were promoted in order to keep people away from real radicalism. The people in power prefer us to discuss gender politics rather than wealth distribution.

And some conspiracies, or secretly made plans, do exist. Secret agencies, notably the CIA, like to have a finger

in every pie. It is well known that the CIA promoted Jackson Pollock, the abstract painter, as a proof of American culture potency against West European Americanophobia. CIA spent much money on development of youth subcul-

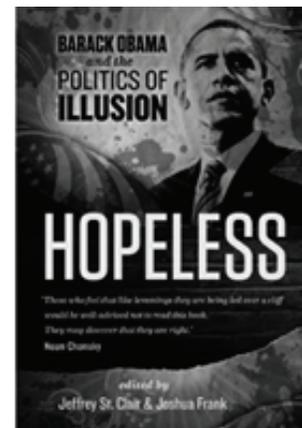
**The *Protocols* marked the Jews as the ultimate plotters and the Church as the victim, or the last defence. Not so in our case. Bolton has thoroughly secularised and sanitised his arguments.**

ture in order to subvert the Soviets, or so they say. NED is a well-known “open conspiracy” financed by the U.S. administration to supplement CIA efforts to undermine unfriendly regimes.

**CP**

**Israel Shamir** lives in Russia.

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“Those who feel that like lemmings they are being led over a cliff would be well-advised not to read this book. They may discover that they are right.”—  
Noam Chomsky