

The Indispensable Enemy and Ideological Construction: Reminiscences of an Octogenarian Radical

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I began writing *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* about thirty-five years ago. It was my doctoral dissertation in history. The circumstances leading to that subject were so close to me then that I took them for granted. Now, in order to place my book in historical context, it requires an effort of memory to bring them back. I will begin by recalling certain details of personal history and try then to relate those to the study of ideology in American culture. I will be struggling here with a problem that all scholars of human history must cope with: that of the relationship between particular facts and experiences on one hand, and generalized conclusions on the other.

Some scholars, perhaps even some historians, regard the effort to generalize from particulars as arrogant and self-serving because it permits escalating one's own particulars to universalizing status. I take the opposite view. To move from the particular to the general is an exercise in humility because it forces one to recognize that particulars—even those privileged details of one's own individual existence—remain meaningless and essentially useless to other people unless they can be shown to typify, or *illuminate*, larger streams of human experience. The basic building blocks of historical explanation are socially-shared experience.

Those also are the building blocks of ideological construction. Historical explanation and ideological construction are closely

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related. One seeks to comprehend the present by reconstructing the past; the other to shape the future by constructing foresights of history in the making.

I

I was born in 1919. Mine was the generation that reached adolescence during the Great Depression. My own history, at the broadest scope, typifies the experience of that generation. More narrowly and more intensely, it typifies the experience of young Americans who were radicalized by the Great Depression. This was a group relatively small in numbers but impressively influential in its time. Some of us organized industrial unions among America's vast new labor force of second generation immigrants. Others tried (and largely failed) to unionize white and black tenant farmers and sharecroppers in the agricultural South. Many of my generation became activists in the left-wing of President Roosevelt's New Deal. Two or three won Oscars in Hollywood. Some volunteered to fight against fascism in Spain.

I am sorry to say I did none of those heroic things. But by sympathy and identification, I was part of the same generational cohort. And, at that point, I consciously entered history—on a miniscule scale, certainly—yet entered nonetheless, along with many others, as conscious participants in historical change. What particular experiences impelled such collective assumptions of responsibility?

Roosevelt—in his second inaugural in 1938—spoke of “one third of a nation, ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.” I was lucky enough not to be born into that bottom third. My parents were middle-class professional people. I never went hungry nor suffered much by way of deprivation. Yet even adolescent boys are social animals, and I was not blind to what was going on around me. My family lived in New York City, in Manhattan, downtown, on the East Side. When my brother and I walked to school three blocks away, we passed at the corner of Third Avenue and Sixteenth Street the end of a breadline that looped all the way around the block. New York in winter can be cold, dismal, wet. People waited from before daybreak for a cup of soup and some slices of bread. They had fires smoldering in old oil drums spaced along the sidewalk, and they took turns crowding up close to warm their hands. Many of the older women were Italian immigrants. They wore black dresses and black shawls that hung down to their knees just as older women did in the old country at that time. I

remember now exactly how the women's hands looked when they held them out to the fire—blue with gleaming white knuckles.

I said I would begin by talking about particulars. Not far away was Union Square where the New York City police grudgingly tolerated demonstrations of working class politics. Huge crowds converged there, especially on Labor Day and May Day. Coming home from school, we could see the crowds with placards and banners, hemmed in by mounted police, and surveyed by policemen from the roofs of buildings along the sides of Union Square. At first the mood of the Depression had been one of hopelessness, resignation, taking whatever came along as if it were punishment for some dereliction or failure. By the time I was in high school in 1933, the mood was changing to one of anger and self-assertion. With self-assertion came hope. All over the United States people began to organize. Farmers organized against mortgage foreclosures; city-dwellers against evictions; the unemployed organized for life-supporting standards of relief. Industrial workers organized unions in the great new mass-production industries like steel and automobile, farm equipment, textiles, meatpacking.

This vast amalgamation of people, upsurging from down under, provided the mass base for what historians now refer to as the New Deal coalition. What were the politics of that coalition? Its main thrust was to demand that the industrial apparatus be modified—humanized somehow—so as to yield to working people and their families some hope for the future; some protection against unemployment, injury-on-the-job, sickness, old age. It was in the signs and placards at Union Square I first heard about Social Security, sixty-five years ago; and Social Security remains today, at the turn of the century, a class-divisive, still bitterly-contested issue.

The 1930s was a period of populist nationalism. Among intellectuals, the expatriates came home from Paris. When I entered college in 1936, the books my classmates admired had titles like *Winesburg, Ohio*, *In the American Grain*, *USA*, *To Have and Have Not*, *Studs Lonigan*, *Tortilla Flat*, *Grapes of Wrath*. The American History survey at Harvard in 1937 assigned Charles and Mary Beard, Lincoln Steffens' *Autobiography*, the *Education of Henry Adams*. My parents, who had scrimped and saved to send my brother and myself to Harvard, were deeply distressed when I dropped out in 1938, and went west—WEST—to Chicago. For them, the Hudson River still marked the western boundary of American culture. I

Photograph by Trudy Saxton.



"World War II, 1944, New York. The little girl is our oldest daughter, Catherine. I am home between Atlantic trips. With us, in U.S. Army uniform, is Tybor Blum, who escaped the Nazi takeover in Czechoslovakia, and his wife Eleanor. My wife, Trudy, was clicking the camera."

tried to make up for that by completing an undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago; but Chicago, to my parents at least, was never the same as Harvard.

II

For me, on the other hand, Chicago was Mecca. A romantic realist, I had read Carl Sandburg on Chicago: hog-butcher of the world, railroad center of the universe! I got a job as laborer in a roundhouse where railroad engines were serviced and repaired. I worked six days-a-week at twenty-five cents an hour. And by that time I had decided what I intended was to learn how people lived in the other America—the *real* America, as I thought, industrial America—and write about their lives. This too was a romantic decision; yet, as it turned out, a massively

realistic one. For the next twenty years I worked at industrial jobs—railroads, factories, steel mills in Chicago; ammunition ships in the North Atlantic and Pacific during the Second World War; and afterwards, when my wife and I moved to California, I worked as construction carpenter in Marin County north of San Francisco. I give this job resumé in a single sentence because what I want mainly to focus on is writing history—and for me this came later.

But to get there, I must first say a few words about the first of three novels I published, long before I started writing history. The novel was titled *Grand Crossing*. I recall it with special fondness because it is the only book I ever wrote that earned any

money—and the only one now totally out of print. I had started writing while I was still in college, before the war. By the time the novel was published—1943—I was trudging back and forth across the Atlantic on World War Two liberty ships. The title, however, had nothing to do with crossing the ocean. My brother suggested, facetiously, that the title referred to crossing the Hudson River.

My own thought was that it referred to the necessity—or aspiration—of crossing from an ethics of individual achievement, to one of moral responsibility for the social order one lived in. The novel was not cast in philosophical terms; nor had I then heard of Jean Paul Sartre, but the imperative was not dissimilar. Its narrative brought forward race and white racism, which, among novels written before the Second World War, made it somewhat unusual. Its *treatment* of race, however, was not unusual. This was the one-world treatment, already enunciated by Roosevelt; by Churchill even; and beaten into cliché during and immediately after the war. One thinks of Steinbeck's *Lifeboat*; or a whole genre of books and movies in which a Texan—along with a Jew from Brooklyn, an African American, or Mexican American, or American Indian—find themselves in a foxhole confronting the grim (and in this situation at least) non-discriminatory foe. I don't mean this was wrong. There were good reasons for supporting the Allied cause in the Second World War; yet it added little to understanding white racism in American culture. What I now find significant about that first novel was its assertion of moral responsibility for the human condition: never mind whether God created the world *ex nihilo* or not; here it is, and I am responsible—you and I both—for what becomes of it.

III

Earlier, when I was recalling childhood memories of the Great Depression in New York, I was trying to convey two recollections that have stayed with me ever since. The first was of women waiting in the winter streets of the silent city. It symbolized what I perceived then (and still perceive) as an ultimate, unforgivable evil—an original sin, one might say—of the human condition. I mean the exploitation of humans by other human beings. The second image was of crowds at Union Square, with placards and banners, demonstrating for industrial unionism and Social Security under the hostile gaze of the police. This I took as symbol of a collective will to transform the human condition—from what it has been, or now is,

to what it could be. Such a will, I imagined then (and still do), would be like a biological instinct, defining the human species. I can even give it a scholarly name—the *utopian impulse*—because I think it possesses both biological and cultural reality.

In Chicago I encountered a third image—that of black men working in gangs along the railroad tracks that laced in and out of the city. These were maintenance-of-the-way workers, called *gandy-dancers* for no reason I ever understood—the most miserable, exposed, hazardous, low-paid, despised occupation of the entire railroad hierarchy. Gandy-dancing belonged, in Chicago of the 1930s, to Americans who were African or Mexican. In New York, where I had grown up, and even more so at Harvard, there certainly had been racial segregation; yet to the eyes of a white, middle-class youth it remained scarcely visible. In Chicago, it dominated the social landscape. Cottage Grove Avenue sliced lengthways through the southern half of the city. The west side of that avenue was black, the east side white. There was no melding of the color line either on city streets or in the racial separation of jobs. And Cottage Grove Avenue, as I learned, did not end at city limits. It stretched from sea to shining sea, across the continent. Exploitation in the past was not always defined on racial lines, and perhaps may not be in the future. But that was then—and still is—the quintessential shape of human exploitation in our time.

These three remembered images converged for me into a kind of trinity—a triptych, an American Gothic of industrial America. And so, when as a college senior in 1939 I set about writing the Great American Novel, I knew these three images would have to form its major components. Yet they were not congruent. They clashed in absolute dissonance. To move beyond racial oppression would require a convergence of the human species; whereas exploitation itself, by fragmenting the human species, postpones any such convergence to astronomical distances. The set of problems conveyed by these images has been at the center of what I



1953, California. I was working as a carpenter and we lived in Sausalito.



1954-55, Sausalito, with Trudy and our two daughters, Catherine and Christine, in front of the house we built evenings and weekends.

have written during the past half century—not only novels and short stories of the first twenty years, but things I have written in history since then.

It seems I was a slow learner. It took me about two decades to learn I was not likely in the foreseeable future to earn a living writing short stories and novels. In 1962—I was then forty-three—I started work on a doctorate in United States history at Berkeley. As a historian I have published two books and the usual medley of journal articles and reviews. The first book, *The Indispensable Enemy*, as I noted at the outset, grew out of my dissertation. I have already summarized the particular experiences that preceded and led into my choice of topic. I need now to comment on certain ideological aspects and implications of that choice.

IV

When I switched from fiction to history, I had spent almost a quarter century as industrial worker, some of those years as activist and union organizer. I had been acutely aware that racial division was a major factor in the ongoing weakness of the American labor movement. I was looking for a topic centered on labor and race, hoping to illuminate—if only for myself—the relation of racial prejudice to class consciousness. What I had in mind, I remember, was something comparable to E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class*, which at that time was transforming the field of labor history both in England and the United States. Such a grand project, however, would have required being able to treat the Chinese segment of the labor force in California at the same level of intensity with which I could treat its European American segments. These latter had usually communicated and kept their records in English. But I did not know Chinese. And being past forty, with a wife and two children, that approach, for me, remained out of reach. Reluctantly I narrowed the problem.

So what was the problem? There was no question as to the actual behavior of white working people in California. Documentary evidence was abundant and already had been arranged by earlier historians into chronological sequences. I perhaps added something new by showing that anti-Chinese, anti-Asian hostilities had been systematically nourished and exploited for almost a century—by labor leaders, to construct racially exclusive craft unions; and by politicians to sustain a white supremacist political party—the Democratic party.

The real problem, however, as I think it must always be in historical study, was not *what* happened, but *why* it happened the way it did. European Americans, migrating to California after the Gold Rush, had never before encountered Chinese. Why did they so readily set aside their own voluminous ethnic and religious paranoias in favor of hating and despising Chinese? Several theories of racial conflict were available to me in the late 1960s. Most attractive of these was the economic argument from job competition. Many Chinese immigrants, coming out of desperate poverty, arrived in California as "coolie" laborers, that is, under indenture, a situation not very different from slavery. Since European Americans, acculturated to higher living standards, would be severely damaged by such job competition, they had no choice—so the argument runs—but to protect themselves *economically* by trying to

Passport photo, about 1963.



exclude Chinese from the labor market, or to bar them from entering the United States at all. This argument points out (correctly) that job competition could hardly be blamed on Euro-American working people, since it was entrepreneurial capitalists (such as the owners of the Central Pacific Railroad) who organized and financed the importation of Chinese; and they did so precisely for the purpose of reducing labor costs.

Apart from its presumed explanatory powers, the job competition argument offered the ideological advantage of exonerating white working people from accusations of racial prejudice—because it justified their actions as economically rational self-defense. Consequently it was often invoked by trade union leaders and held strong appeal for social scientists and historians sympathetic to organized labor. It appealed to me for the same reasons. Yet I quickly discovered that it could not meet my needs as an explanation of the anti-Chinese movement in California. Its timing was wrong. According to the competition argument, racial hostility results from job competition. California, however, from the Gold Rush in 1849 until the 1870s, exhibited a characteristic frontier economy in which labor was scarce and wages high. The actual effect of Chinese immigration during this period—by speeding up infrastructural development—was to *enhance* opportunities for European Americans to move up to self-employment, or into skilled trades and supervisory positions. Not until completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, and the Depression of 1873, did mass unemployment and job competition really hit the West Coast. Hostile actions against Chinese, by contrast, dated from their first arrival twenty years earlier.

Thus, while job competition might account for the intensification of racial hostilities after 1869, it said nothing as to the origin of those hostilities. What I needed was to explain why so many European American working people carried white racism with them on their journey to California. At that point I began assem-

bling an argument which I thought of at first as simply political. It ran as follows: The Jacksonian Democratic party had dominated American politics for thirty years prior to the Civil War. It governed California after the acquisition of California in 1848. Jacksonian Democracy functioned in national politics as a coalition of northern and western farmers and workingmen, on one hand, with slave-owning Southern planters on the other. Territorial expansion and defense of slavery headed the Jacksonian party's political agenda, while its moral catechism asserted racial inferiority of Africans and Indians—in contrast to the absolute fraternal equality of white men as members of the ruling race. The Jacksonian ethic was egalitarian for whites, hierarchical with respect to people of color.

This ideological baggage, I reasoned—absorbed in the eastern states—had traveled with European Americans, native and foreign-born, when they poured into California after the Gold Rush. Most European immigrants to California came by way of the Atlantic crossing and many of these had lingered for a generation or two on the East Coast before journeying West. From the work of other historians I was beginning to understand that Western Europe had been engaged almost as intensely as the United States in colonial exploitations and that newcomers from Europe would be carrying racial attitudes that needed only to be focused and lethalized to bring them into line with the Jacksonian persuasion they would encounter in California.

I actually used the phrase “ideological baggage” as title for the second and most important chapter of my dissertation. But I was then a long distance from anticipating the difficulties involved in the notion of ideological construction as a causal factor of historical change. To provide a foundation for the argument I was putting together about racial conflict in California, I would have needed to show—

- (1) That belief in the inferiority of non-white people had been generated by slavery and the slave trade;
- (2) That this same belief had been extended and reinforced by European wars of conquest worldwide, and especially against American Indians;
- (3) That such white racist beliefs developed enormous retentive power—since they have lasted now for half a millennium;

- (4) That white racism was socialized into the consciousness of generations of European American working people, most of whom had no direct contact with African slavery—nor with the slave trade, or wars against native Americans; and finally,
- (5) That all this *ideological baggage* was brought to bear against Chinese immigrants in California.

The Indispensable Enemy, I am obliged to confess, touches base only at the last of these five points. The first four I simply took for granted; or remained unaware of any need for such explanatory sequences. Yet after I finished the book, these problems in their general form confronted me; and I can say I have been whittling away at them ever since. There is no need, here, to retrace all that step by step. One particular episode by way of illustration will serve to make my point. While scanning California newspapers of the 1850s, I had noted that blackface minstrel shows were popular in mining camps and that prominent minstrel companies from back East regularly visited San Francisco. I was then astonished to discover that one of the earliest on-stage caricatures of Chinese occurred at a minstrel performance, presumably in blackface. I set this nugget aside to follow up later when I could visit the New York Public Library's theatrical collection. The result was an essay, "Blackface Minstrelsy and Jacksonian Ideology," probably the most widely read historical piece I have written.

I won't claim I was first to observe the symbiosis of blackface minstrelsy—as mass entertainment—with the Democratic party program; but I think I am accurate in saying I was one of the first to treat this as significant information. In my own case, it has led me in pursuit of ideological construction as a major enterprise of human culture; and I mean not only at the low level, but the high; not only popular culture like blackface minstrelsy itself, or melodrama, or dime novels—but "elite" culture like *Moby Dick* or *Leaves of Grass*—or *Hamlet*, if you wish, or *Paradise Lost*.

V

This has the effect of placing the study of ideology on a wide screen. Such breadth is necessary, I think; but runs the risk of equating ideology with culture itself, or with *Weltanschauung*, worldview; in which case it becomes useless for analytical or explanatory purposes. On the other hand, narrowing the concept of ideology to mean only hypocrisy, or self-serving deceit, precludes its application—in whatever social order we may be studying—to the mainstream of intellectual and political behavior.



Lone Pine, California, 1985. Trudy and I with Robert Rydell, then a graduate student at UCLA, now professor of history at Montana State University, Bozeman.

In America, scholarly treatment of ideology has verged on the paranoid. I find it embarrassing, in the 1990s, to reread a work like Daniel Bell's *End of Ideology*, in which an otherwise intelligent writer shows himself totally unperceptive of the ideological baggage contained in his own status of social scientist in the Cold War establishment. During my working life as a historian, the two most influential treatments by American scholars have been Bernard Bailyn's *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, and Clifford Geertz' essay on "Ideology as a Cultural System." Both are serious works that contain illuminating insights. Both, however, deal with the concept of ideology by evading its cutting edge. Bailyn's *Ideological Origins* actually is a study not in *ideological* but *intellectual* history—in the history of ideas, almost as if ideas themselves were autonomous actors in historical change. Geertz' famous essay presents ideology as a particular *type* of sociopolitical discourse—one that makes use of *tropes*, symbolic figures of speech such as metaphor—to convey its meanings. Yet since all human discourse employs tropes and metaphors to convey meaning, the result is to equate ideology with culture-at-large; which, again (as I suggested above) is to render it useless for historical explanation.

Bailyn's book reduces historical explanation to the presumed self-propulsion of ideas. Geertz's essay tends to disparage the importance, or even possibility, of causal explanation.

Most written history is narrative. It recounts what happened, not why it happened. But if the crucial question always is *why*—then *why* mandates a search for causes. Causation in history has usually been conceived under three main headings: vast, impersonal determinisms; contingency (chance or accident); and doings of powerful individuals. The most frequently invoked determinisms are economic or geographic; but it is worth remembering that racism itself represents a deterministic theory of history; and that the most prevalent of all determinisms has been belief in Providential intervention—in the guidance, that is, of a divine but Invisible Hand, beyond human power to comprehend, yet somehow always benevolent. During our modern era of technology and science, we have learned to conceptualize Providential determinism as the Invisible Hand of the Free Market.

The value of ideology for causal explanation lies in its emphasis on *class* (or social group) as the dynamic component of socialization, therefore of individual and collective consciousness. Collective consciousness makes possible purposeful collective actions. Lacking a concept of ideology, we would be left with nothing, save sheer contingency between the historical determinisms on one hand, and acts by heroic or destructive individuals on the other. That is, we would be reduced in our accounts of historical causation either to arguments that exclude human purpose altogether, or to elitist arguments which locate effective purpose only in thoughts and actions of outstanding individuals. I think the reason American scholars encounter so much difficulty in coping with ideology is that American culture, during the past century at least, has been structured to obliterate any perception of class as a component of social consciousness. To explain this curious aspect of American exceptionalism historians have invoked both economic and geographic determinism as well as deeds and thoughts of great men, such as Adam Smith or Thomas Jefferson. For myself, I think it more helpful to construct an *ideological* explanation for the alleged end of ideology. This was what I attempted in *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (1990), which I wrote more or less as an answer, or sequel, to *The Indispensable Enemy*.

If ideology expressed only class interest, it might serve to explain historical change but could offer no promise for ameliora-

tion of the human condition since all that could be expected would be an endless sequence of exploitive dominations by one class after another. Successful ideologies would then become ideologies of repression like white racism; yet we know there also are ideologies of the oppressed which often proclaim goals of universal liberation. My own concept is that while class interest sets the immediate goals of ideological behavior, its more distant goals derive from what I referred to earlier as utopian impulse. Such an impulse, I suggested, enters human consciousness as an almost-biological drive for direction and purposefulness. Ideology could then be seen as an ongoing effort to justify the short-range, self-serving demands of class or group interest by harnessing these to a broader sense of collective moral purpose. But what defines *collective moral purpose*? That group to which our most deeply-felt identification binds each one of us. If there is amelioration or progress in human history, it can reside only in a gradual expansion of this moral identification. In ancient times, moral identity was bounded by tribe or city-state; in our own era, by ethnic, or "racial," or national affiliations. Tomorrow, the world?

And that question brings me once again to the triptych of images inscribed in my own adolescent recollections of the Great Depression. One was an image of black gandy-dancers wielding their picks and shovels along the railroad embankments. Racial segregation was then (and still is) the quintessential shape of human exploitation in our time. To move beyond racial hatreds and separations would require an ideological convergence of the human species; yet exploitation itself fragments the human species, postponing any such convergence to astronomical distances. Will the Invisible Hand of our providential Free Market, extending its jurisdiction over a globalized economy, serve to reduce human exploitation? Visible evidence—thus far—points in the opposite direction.

VI

It is time now to bring this circle back to its starting point. *The Indispensable Enemy* has sometimes been cited as having contributed to the development of Asian American Studies in its early stages. I am proud of this association. Asian American Studies, we remember, developed as part of the broader Ethnic Studies movement which in turn stemmed out of the Civil Rights upsurge of the late 1950s and early '60s. Ethnic studies, like the Civil Rights Movement itself, challenged the dominance of white racism in

American culture and institutions. At this level, Ethnic Studies began as a cultural alliance of racial minorities—peoples of color—whose communities were enclaved within the overarching structure of the European American White Republic. On a deeper level, however, Ethnic Studies was also a class alliance. To confirm this point one need simply recall the economic goals targeted by affirmative action, such as equal access for Americans of all racial backgrounds to public and governmental services, housing, employment; and most important of all—through education—to an equitable share in the social and cultural creativity of American society. What held this alliance together (despite its cultural dissimilarities) was a shared awareness (*ideology*, if you please) of being similarly victimized by *class* exploitation. *Class* exploitation means economic exploitation, and all exploitation of humans by other humans is basically economic.

Affirmative action scored some signal victories. The cost of doing so was to unite powerful segments of the White Republic in opposition. This hampered affirmative action and prevented the filling out of its logical agenda. What affirmative action achieved is immensely valuable, but the achievements remain scattered and uneven. Their impact on the class status of different segments of the Ethnic Studies alliance has varied widely; and as the shared awareness of being similarly exploited fades into the background, cultural differences become more divisive. Moral identifications of class and ethnicity sometimes overlap and reinforce each other (as they did in the 1950s and '60s). More often, in American history at least, they have cut at right angles, impeding one another's progress (as they tended to do again in the 1990s). On college and university campuses, the Ethnic Studies movement proved extraordinarily successful; yet what was once a "movement" has now become a galaxy of discrete centers and departments each pursuing its own particular track of historical and cultural studies. Not only have Ethnic Studies moved apart because the racial minorities they represent stand in altered economic relations to one another; but class separation has penetrated each of these minorities more deeply than ever before. This structural change—resulting in part from the successes of affirmative action—alters the relationship of ethnic studies programs to working-class segments within their own constituencies.

I am not suggesting that the need for ethnic studies programs has diminished. On the contrary, I think the need will be greater than ever. But the socioeconomic context within which

leaders of Ethnic Studies design and carry out their projects for research and teaching has changed profoundly. Leaders in Ethnic Studies will need to struggle to preserve whatever can be salvaged from the unity of the original coalition. They will need to shift from a retrospective view of particular immigrant minorities in American history to a contemporary view of those same minorities as related to the cultures in their lands of origin. Above all, I think, they will need to integrate working class components of their own ethnicities into the cultural (and political) projects proposed by the Ethnic Studies centers. Even in the United States, which sits rather crudely at the apex of the globalizing process, our social landscape also is being globalized. The providential Free Market hardly tolerates sanctuaries except those that may be privatized by wealth. So what will become of ideological construction and “utopian impulse” in our brave new world? Here I can best end these reminiscences by quoting from the final pages of my second—and perhaps last—work in history:

. . . Yet in the long run the ancient wisdom seems likely to prevail: a camel will pass through the eye of a needle sooner than a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven. Wealth, privilege, power, tend to narrow the vision of ruling classes and their mercenary retainers. If this is true, far-reaching prospects of the human condition are more likely to be constructed in the ghettos of great cities and third world barrios (or in the work of intellectuals whose socialization has contained “organic” links to such experience) than among the CEOs of global enterprize or within military-industrial complexes.