

# Overview: Race, Security, and Social Movements

## Editors

**T**HIS ISSUE TOOK SHAPE DURING THE BUILDUP TO THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S preemptive war against Iraq and the worldwide mobilization against it. Its contents appropriately reflect a longer view of U.S. militarism and populist nationalism, the criminalization and repression of domestic dissent, and the movements that have challenged the power arrangements that sustain American structures of inequality. "Patriot Acts," by Tony Platt and Cecilia O'Leary, discusses the extraordinary changes that have taken place within the repressive state apparatus since September 11, 2001, and the cultural expressions of patriotism that inform and justify the rollback of post-Watergate reforms and chilling of civil liberties. They catalog the coercive measures taken in the name of patriotism during times of war in the 20th century and the consequences of the USA Patriot Act and related changes in policy and government. The article discusses the contemporary discourse of right-wing nationalism and the possibilities for reviving a progressive tradition of patriotism.

In "Class, Crime, and Film Noir," Dennis Broe looks at how this genre has reflected an American anti-authoritarian tradition and has changed in tandem with the relative power of organized labor *vis-à-vis* the corporate state. In these films, the sympathetic fugitive's journey outside the law paralleled that of labor in the postwar period, when unions and wildcat strikers were criminalized first in a massive strike wave and later as victims of legislation (the Taft-Hartley Act) and governmental investigations (HUAC) that retroactively outlawed their actions. Broe traces how this sympathy for working-class rebellion was systematically rolled back within the crime film, which emerged in the early to mid-1950s at the height of the Cold War and labor's enlistment in the corporate state. The article examines the influence of September 11 on television programming and the ways in which fugitive outsider has continued to resurface, despite the current remilitarization and one of the most repressive seasons in television history. Whereas in the early 1970s ABC's "The FBI" produced a sanitized, J. Edgar Hoover-approved image of the agency while the FBI systematically abused First Amendment rights of civil rights and peace activists, and targeted Martin Luther King, Jr., and other Black leaders, today the CIA's connection to CBS's "The Agency" reflects a similar media boosterism of the state repressive apparatus.

The next two essays represent a dialogue between Rod Bush and Asafa Jalata on the origins and history of the Civil Rights Movement and Black nationalism in

the U.S. and globally. They detail the suppression of these movements and what Bush terms the continuing struggle for the redemption of America. Bush's article seeks to understand the Civil Rights Movement in the context of its larger role as a force for the democratization of U.S. society, internally and in its international relations. These movements provoked a society-wide debate about the nature of racism, power, poverty, and democracy, as well as vastly expanded notions of equality and social justice. In this conjuncture, as Black leaders built a coalition of radicals in the Civil Rights Movement, Black nationalists in the U.S., and revolutionaries in the three continents, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and a generation of opposition leaders were assassinated. Jalata maintains that the capitalist world-system that produced modern slavery, colonization, genocide or ethnocide, cultural destruction and repression, and continued subjugation also facilitated the emergence and development of the African American and Oromo movements. This study outlines the history of American slavery through the modern Black Freedom Struggle and compares the experience to the state terrorism practiced against the Oromo people of northeast Africa.

Steve Martinot explicitly links U.S. foreign policy to the racialized nature of the American nation. He looks at the cultural roots of interventionism in the U.S. in an attempt to explain the apparent institutional and popular support for military actions over two decades, from Grenada, Panama, and Kosovo to Afghanistan and Iraq in the wake of September 11, which initiated a period of "endless war." Each action violated principles of democracy, sovereignty, and international law, but was carried out with impunity. For Martinot, the antiwar movement is mistaken to rely on arguments decrying such injustices, even if they are consistent with American traditions, because there is an overriding cultural ethic at work based in a consciousness of the U.S. not as a political entity, but as a racialized "white nation." The author traces American nationalism from the initial desire to separate from England, through the defense of slavery after the Revolution, and into the phase of military interventions that accompanied colonial expansion. He concludes that U.S. interventionism has three structural elements that are homologous to corresponding elements of white racialized identity and white supremacy: an allegiance to itself as a messianic concern, a paranoia that reflects itself as an arbitrary denigration or criminalization (the dis-humanization of others as undemocratic or chaotic), and a reliance on gratuitous and self-justifying violence.

In "The Diversity Rationale in Higher Education," Adalberto Aguirre, Jr., and Rubén Martínez look at the historical legacy of race-based privilege and inequality in America. The essay reviews and discusses legal challenges to diversity and affirmative action initiatives in higher education, particularly through key Supreme Court decisions. The authors make a plea to reverse the current rightward trend and promote the long-term benefits of a society based on inclusion and equality for nonwhite persons.

Kara Zugman's case study of Fuerza Unida uses new social movement theory to give insight into a new form of political expression that straddles the traditional redistributive goals of labor unions and newer meaning or identity-based organizational forms, in this case one created by women of Mexican or Mexican-American descent. In the 1980s, economic restructuring led to plant closings across many industries, including the labor-intensive apparel industry. Fuerza Unida was born in the wake of a Levi Strauss and Company garment plant closure in January 1990 in San Antonio, Texas. This article addresses the occupational health and security concerns of these workers, and the ways in which the company succeeded in outflanking unions through appeals to the family and community that resonated with the cultural expectations of these women. The author points out that this organizational error, particularly in a workforce increasingly made up of immigrant women, is avoidable. She cites Latin American women and women of color in the United States who have fought for social change not by abandoning their traditional role as mothers, but by transforming the meaning of that role, often infusing it with radical politics.

Social movement theory is also a concern of Andrew Woolford and R.S. Ratner. Their article on "Nomadic Justice" addresses the danger that restorative justice programs might become simply cost-effective extensions of the neoliberal state, rather than genuinely progressive actors on the margins of the law. The article examines the tensions that exist within the restorative justice movement, particularly in British Columbia, as it seeks to construct for itself a collective identity and define its broader goals. This movement of professional "outsiders within" the criminal justice system might engage in a "transformative politics" of restorative justice that challenges and rewrites the system's retributive codes.

Randall Amster's "Patterns of Exclusion: Sanitizing Space, Criminalizing Homelessness" scrutinizes the systematic violation of the civil rights of homeless people, especially through criminalization and exclusionary policing practices in urban settings. Although the homeless as a class lack almost all indicia of societal power, posing no viable political, economic, or military threat to the dominant culture, their presence elicits a particularly vehement and violent response. The trend toward restricting, regulating, and removing the homeless from public view began in the early history of capitalism, but now at issue is a process of cultural cleansing, as economic, political, and legal authorities work to recapture and redesign the public spaces of the city. In their arsenal are notions of deviance, demonization via associations with filth and disease metaphors (leading to dehumanization), and criminalization. A significant justification for anti-homeless laws has been the "broken windows" theory of James Wilson and George Kelling, which has become a cornerstone of community policing programs premised upon aggressive order maintenance and a proactive, interventionist police strategy.

In "Community-Building and Reintegrative Approaches to Community Policing," Barry Goetz and Roger Mitchell examine how different policing practices

work to include or exclude socially marginal populations, in this case those with substance abuse and illicit drug use problems. In the venues studied, Norfolk, Virginia, and Baltimore, Maryland, such reintegrative programs have largely failed. In the handling of addiction problems, faced with the choice of punitive order maintenance functions or more humane approaches that require police partnerships with a wide variety of community-based and other government organizations, as well as social outreach, police choose a “broken windows” routine of sanitizing through nuisance abatement and arrests over referrals to health and human services.

Finally, Dario Melossi’s essay announces the timely republication of Georg Rushe and Otto Kirchheimer’s classic text, *Punishment and Social Structure*. Melossi surveys the literature spawned by their thesis on the history of punishment and takes it in new and interesting directions. He addresses areas of the book that have come under criticism: the treatment of totalitarianism and the imprisonment of women. Melossi attempts to deepen Rusche’s work in terms of long-term development by using “long cycles” of punishment. This approach situates patterns of imprisonment within the shifts triggered by innovation in the relative power of entrepreneurs and the working class. This gives insight into the “great internment” of the last quarter of the 20th century in the U.S., as well as into why the increased personal security of Americans was not at issue.

We can be certain that the right-wing internationalists’ pursuit of “regime change” through preemptive war will not create genuine security in the world, any more than sanitizing urban spaces of substance abusers and the homeless will have the hoped-for results sought by the proponents of proactive, interventionist police strategies.