

Overview: The Intersection Of Ideologies of Violence

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THIS ISSUE OF *SOCIAL JUSTICE* SEEKS TO EXPLAIN VIOLENCE AT THE LOCAL AND global levels, as well as its simultaneous manifestations in society's structural, material, cultural, and political spheres. Violence is a social issue that springs from a wide range of ideologies and is an occurrence inscribed in our daily individual and collective experience. It leaves an imprint on us as individuals and societies. From open armed conflict as a means of imposing a political doctrine, a rationale for liberation, or a religious faith, to the militarization of civilian society, to the pain of alienation in the context of work and other cultural milieus, the use of violence has become perhaps the most significant sign that characterizes contemporary human civilization.

Four central ideologies of violence are patriarchal domination, white supremacy, religious fundamentalism, and savage competition and individualism, nurtured by a rapacious capitalism with its extreme concentration of wealth and widespread poverty. Throughout the articles in this issue, these ideologies are discussed not as discrete and disconnected forces of everyday life, but as profoundly interconnected and complementary. Beyond addressing the enactment of violence through these ideologies, the articles propose transformative strategies on how to engage violence, thus widening the perspectives on the topic.

New discourses covered include the role of the state and social movements, identity politics as a transformative agent, the combined power of ethnicity, class, and gender politics as an organizing force, the promises and restrictions of human rights litigation, rescuing the vocational value embedded in the act of work, and the use of film as an instrument that goes beyond denunciation to offer critical pedagogies to counter the politics of fear prevalent in societies such as the United States.

Sangeeta Kamat and Biju Mathew's article, "Mapping Political Violence in a Globalized World: The Case of Hindu Nationalism," uncovers the local and global ramifications of a movement that combines caste, faith, and culture to impose its nationalistic agenda. They do this by analyzing the mass murder of Muslims

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committed in Gujarat in 2002 by alleged Hindu mobs. According to Kamat and Mathew, the attempted ethnic cleansing against those considered enemies of the Hindu “race” is part of a longstanding ideological effort in India that has recently branched out to Indian communities abroad, in particular those in the United States and England.

Mariana Mora’s account of 10 years of indigenous rebellion in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, invites the reader to rethink the value of grassroots political movements and their relationship to the national state through her article on the Zapatista struggle. The author narrates the evolving role of social movements based on a comprehensive political program that combines economic, political, cultural, gender, and linguistic rights aimed at the transformation of power relations and the removal of the traditional protagonist role of the state. Mora posits that a politics of listening and dignity stands at the center of the indigenous struggle in Mexico.

In “The Racial Economies of Criminalization, Immigration, and Policing in Italy,” Asale Angel-Ajani documents how the enactment of restrictive laws on crime and their draconian application go hand in hand with the criminalization of immigrants, more specifically African women, primarily from Nigeria. Similar to the experience in the United States, in Italy — as in most of Europe — discourses on immigration conflate with a harsh anticrime rhetoric that depicts immigrants as “clandestine” enclaves of people prone to criminal behavior.

In “Defending the *Pueblo*: Indigenous Identity and Struggles for Social Justice in Guatemala, 1970 to 1980,” Betsy Konefal provides a historical account of the challenges encountered by Guatemala’s oppressed majority — the native Mayans — in building a movement that vindicates the dignity denied to them for five centuries. Konefal offers a narrative of a people determined to build their movement in the face of harrowing and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, including genocidal military campaigns. The article offers a compelling analysis of the intersection of race, social class, and gender, which is applicable to the experiences of other peoples wrestling with similar issues.

Victoria Sandford’s discussion of a widespread paramilitary phenomenon throughout Colombia insightfully analyzes how armed conflict has affected all segments of that society. In “Learning to Kill by Proxy: Colombian Paramilitaries and the Legacy of Central American Death Squads, Contras, and Civil Patrols,” the writer documents U.S. interventionism, the difficult task of a human rights defense, and the possibilities of a strengthened civil society that might emerge from the current chaos.

Ronnie Casella examines the relationship between the security industry and public and private institutions in his article on the false allure of security technologies. This original study explores federal support and corporate strategies that encourage the use of security technologies in nearly all private and public places. The article focuses on security installations in schools, but it also offers a

framework for understanding how the use of security technologies in all facets of life (at work, in recreation areas, in government and corporate buildings, and in public spaces) undermines civil rights and personal privacy.

In his discussion of the effects of work as a commoditized and alienating activity, Alberto Arenas maps out the trajectory for a new discourse on the moral and vocational nature of work. “In Defense of Good Work: Jobs, Violence, and the Ethical Dimension” persuasively critiques the “economic man” model, which provides an ethically deficient assessment of the human motivation for work given its overemphasis on self-interest. The author argues instead for a redefinition of work as a morally infused task that seeks to serve the larger public good.

Finally, Deborah Cook’s philosophical treatment of legitimacy and political violence focuses primarily on the ideas of Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas, an influential new social movement theorist. The essay explores how legitimacy is defined and under what conditions it may be ascribed to states or terrorist organizations.

In the next section, Rosario Ordoñez-Jasis and Pablo Jasis review Michael Moore’s *Bowling for Columbine*, a disturbing story about the fabrication and perpetuation of fear in society, especially in the United States. The essay examines how a multilevel campaign of fear works to legitimize symbolic and material violence at the national and international levels. It also addresses the social implications of this violence. The authors explore the possibility of articulating an oppositional pedagogy of peace as an alternative to the discourse of war, criminalization, and social alienation.

The closing essay of this issue is a call for action against interpersonal and state violence by a coalition of 29 organizations across the United States. They seek an end to violence against women and the creation of a violence-free society, based on “radical freedom, mutual accountability, and passionate reciprocity.”