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the political logic of the non-profit industrial complex

PERHAPS NEVER BEFORE HAS THE STRUGGLE TO MOUNT VIABLE movements of radical social transformation in the United States been more desperate, urgent, or difficult. In the aftermath of the 1960s mass-movement era, the edifices of state repression have themselves undergone substantive transformation, even as classical techniques of politically formed state violence—colonization and protocolonial occupation, racist policing, assassination, political and mass-based imprisonment—remain fairly constant in the US production of global order. Here, I am specifically concerned with the emergence of the US prison industrial complex (PIC) and its relationship to the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC), the industrialized incorporation of pro-state liberal and progressive campaigns and movements into a spectrum of government-proctored non-profit organizations. In my view, these overlapping developments—the rise of a racially constituted prison regime unprecedented in scale, and the almost simultaneous structural consolidation of a non-profit industrial complex—have exerted a form and content to US-based resistance struggles which enmeshes them in the social arrangement that political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal names an "industry of fear." In a 1998 correspondence to the 3,000-plus participants in the conference Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex, he writes,

> Americans live in a cavern of fear, a psychic, numbing force manufactured by the so-called entertainment industry, reified by the psychological industry, and buttressed by the coercion industry (i.e., the courts, police, prisons, and the like). The social psychology of America is being fed by a media that threatens all with an army of psychopathic, deviant, sadistic madmen bent on ravishing a helpless, prone citizenry. The state's coercive apparatus of "public safety" is erected as a needed protective counter-point.[1]

I wish to pay special attention to Abu-Jamal's illustration of the social fabrication of fear as a necessary political and cultural condition for the rise of the US non-profit industrial complex, which has, in turn, *enabled and complemented* the massive institutional production of the US prison industrial complex. As I understand it, the NPIC is the set of symbiotic relationships that link together political

and financial technologies of state and owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements, since about the mid-1970s. Abu-Jamal's "cavern of fear" illuminates the repressive and popular broadly racist common sense that both haunts and constitutes the political imagination of many contemporary progressive, radical, and even self-professed "revolutionary" social change activists. Why, in other words, does the political imagination of the US non-profit and nongovernmental organization (NGO)-enabled Left generally refuse to embrace the urgent and incomplete *historical* work of a radical counter-state, anti-white supremacist, *prison/penal/slave abolitionist* movement? I am especially concerned with how the political assimilation of the non-profit sector into the progressive dreams of a "democratic" global civil society (the broad premise of the liberal-progressive antiglobalization movement) already presumes (and therefore fortifies) existing structures of social liquidation, including biological and social death. Does Abu-Jamal's "cavern of fear" also echo the durable historical racial phobias of the US social order generally? Does the specter of an authentic *radical freedom* no longer structured by the assumptions underlying the historical "freedoms" invested in white American political identity—including the perversions and mystifications of such concepts as "democracy," "civil rights," "the vote," and even "equality"—logically suggest the *end of white civil society,* which is to say a collapsing of the very sociocultural foundations of the United States itself? Perhaps it is the fear of a radically transformed, feminist/queer/anti-racist *liberation* of Black, Brown, and Red bodies, no longer *presumed to be permanently subordinated* to structures of criminalization, colonization, (state and state-ordained) bodily violence, and domestic warfare, that logically threatens the very existence of the still white-dominant US Left: perhaps it is, in part, the Left's fear of an unleashed *bodily proximity* to currently criminalized, colonized, and normatively violated peoples that compels it to retain the staunchly anti-abolitionist political limits of the NPIC. The persistence of such a racial fear—in effect, the fear of a radical freedom that obliterates the cultural and material ascendancy of "white freedom"—is neither new nor unusual in the history of the US Left. We are invoking, after all, the vision of a movement of liberation that abolishes (and transforms) the cultural, economic, and political structures of a white civil society that continues to largely define the terms, languages, and limits of US-based progressive (and even "radical") campaigns, political discourses, and local/global movements.

This polemical essay attempts to dislodge some of the theoretical and operational assumptions underlying the glut of foundation-funded "establishment Left" organizations in the United States. The Left's investment in the essential political logic of civil society—specifically, the inherent legitimacy of racist state

violence in upholding a white freedom, social "peace," and "law and order" that is fundamentally designed to maintain brutal inequalities in the putative free world—is *symbiotic with (and not oppositional to)* the policing and incarceration of marginalized, racially pathologized communities, as well as the state's *ongoing absorption* of organized dissent through the non-profit structure. While this alleged Left frequently considers its array of incorporated, "legitimate" organizations and institutions as the fortified bulwark of a progressive "social justice" orientation in civil society, I am concerned with the ways in which the broad assimilation of such organizations into a non-profit industrial complex actually *enables* more vicious forms of state repression.

the velvet purse of state repression

It may be appropriate to initiate this discussion with a critical reflection on the accelerated incorporation of progressive social change struggles into a structure of state accreditation and owning-class surveillance since the 1970s. Robert L. Allen's classic book *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* was among the first works to offer a sustained political analysis of how liberal white philanthropic organizations—including the Rockefeller, Ford, and Mellon foundations—*facilitated* the violent state repression of radical and revolutionary elements within the Black liberation movements of the late 1960s and early 70s. Allen argues that it was precisely because of philanthropy's overtures toward the movement's more moderate and explicitly reformist elements—especially those advocating versions of "Black capitalism" and "political self-determination" through participation in electoral politics—that radical Black liberationists and revolutionaries were more easily criminalized and liquidated.[2] Allen's account, which appears in this collection, proves instructive for a current critique of the state-corporate alliance that keeps the lid on what is left of Black liberationist politics, along with the cohort of radical struggles encompassed by what was once called the US "Third World" Left. Perhaps as important, Allen's analysis may provide a critical analytical framework through which to understand the problem of white ascendancy and liberal white supremacy within the dominant spheres of the NPIC, which has become virtually synonymous with the broader political category of a US Left.

The massive repression of the Black, Native American, Puerto Rican, and other US-based Third World liberation movements during and beyond the 1960s and 70s was founded on a coalescence of official and illicit/illegal forms of state and state-sanctioned violence: police-led racist violence (including false imprisonment, home invasions, assassinations, and political harassment), white civilian reaction (lynchings, vigilante movements, new electoral blocs, and a complementary surge of

white nationalist organizations), and the proliferation of racially formed (and racially executed) juridical measures to criminalize and imprison entire populations of poor and working class Black, Brown, and Indigenous people has been—and continues to be—a fundamental legacy of this era. Responding to the liberation-movement era's momentary disruption of a naturalized American apartheid and taken-for-granted domestic colonialism, a new coalition of prominent owning-class white philanthropists, lawmakers, state bureaucrats, local and federal police, and ordinary white civilians (from across the already delimited US political spectrum of "liberal" to "conservative") scrambled to restore the coherence and stability of white civil society in the midst of a fundamental challenge from activists and radical movement intellectuals who envisioned substantive transformation in the very foundations of US "society" itself. One outcome of this movement toward "White Reconstruction" was the invention, development, and refinement of repressive policing technologies across the local and federal scales, a labor that encompassed a wide variety of organizing and deployment strategies. The notorious Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) of J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) remains the most historically prominent incident of the undeclared warfare waged by the state against domestic populations, insurrections, and suspected revolutionaries. But the spectacle of Hooverite repression obscures the broader—and far more important—convergence of state and capitalist/philanthropic forces in the absorption of progressive social change struggles that defined this era and its current legacies.

During this era, US civil society—encompassing the private sector, non-profit organizations and NGOs, faith communities, the mass media and its consumers—partnered with the law-and-order state through the reactionary white populist sentimentality enlivened by the respective presidential campaigns of Republican Party presidential nominees Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon. It was Goldwater's eloquent articulation of the meaning of "freedom," defined against a racially coded (though nonetheless transparent) imagery of oncoming "mob" rule and urban "jungle" savagery, poised to liquidate white social existence, that carried his message into popular currency. Goldwater's political and cultural conviction was to *defend* white civil society from its racially depicted aggressors—a white supremacist discourse of self-defense that remains a central facet of the US state and US political life generally. Though his bid for the presidency failed, Goldwater's message succeeded as the catalyst for the imminent movement of White Reconstruction in the aftermath of US apartheid's nominal disestablishment, and in the face of liberal reformist changes to US civil rights law. Accepting the 1964 Republican presidential nomination, Goldwater famously pronounced,

> Tonight there is violence in our streets, corruption in our highest offices, aimlessness among our youth, anxiety among our elders and there is a virtual despair among the many who look beyond material success for the inner meaning of their lives....Security from domestic violence, no less than from foreign aggression, is the most elementary and fundamental purpose of any government, and a government that cannot fulfill that purpose is one that cannot long command the loyalty of its citizens. History shows us—demonstrates that nothing—nothing prepares the way for tyranny more than the failure of public officials to keep the streets from bullies and marauders.[3]

On the one hand, the subsequent exponential growth of the US policing apparatus closely followed the white populist political schema of the Goldwater-Nixon law-and-order bloc.[4] Law and order was essentially the harbinger of White Reconstruction, mobilizing an apparatus of state violence to protect *and recuperate* the vindicated white national body from the allegedly imminent aggressions and violations of its racial Others. White civil society, accustomed to generally unilateral and exclusive access to the cultural, economic, and political capital necessary for individual and collective self-determination, encountered reflections of its own undoing at this moment. The politics of law and order thus significantly encompassed white supremacist desire for surveilling, policing, caging, and (preemptively) socially liquidating those who embodied the gathering storm of dissidence—organized and disarticulated, radical and protopolitical.

In this historical context, COINTELPRO's illegal and unconstitutional abuses of state power, unabashed use of strategic and deadly violence, and development of invasive, terrorizing surveillance technologies might be seen as *paradigmatic of* the contemporary era's revivified white supremacist hegemony.[5] Contrary to the widespread assumption that COINTELPRO was somehow excessive, episodic, and extraordinary in its deployment of (formally illegal and unconstitutional) state violence, J. Edgar Hoover's venerated racist-state strategy simply reflected the imperative of white civil society's impulse toward *self-preservation* in this moment.[6] Elaborating the white populist vision of Goldwater and his political descendants, the consolidation of this white nationalist bloc—which eventually incorporated "liberals" as well as reactionaries and conservatives—was simply the *political* reconsolidation of a white civil society that had momentarily strolled with the specter of its own incoherence.

Goldwater's epoch-shaping presidential campaign in 1964 set up the political premises and popular *racial* vernacular for much of what followed in the restoration of white civil society in the 1970s and later. In significant part through the reorganization of a US state that strategically mobilized around an internally complex, substantively dynamic white supremacist conception of "security from domestic violence," the "law and order" state has materialized on the ground

and has generated a *popular consensus* around its modes of dominance: punitive racist criminal justice, paramilitary policing, and strategically deployed domestic warfare regimes have become an American way of life. This popularized and institutionalized "law and order" state has built this popular consensus in part through a symbiosis with the non-profit liberal foundation structure, which, in turn, has helped *collapse* various sites of potential political radicalism into nonantagonistic social service and pro-state reformist initiatives. Vast expenditures of state capacity, from police expansion to school militarization, and the multiplication of state-formed popular cultural productions (from the virtual universalization of the "tough on crime" electoral campaign message to the explosion of pro-police discourses in Hollywood film, television dramas, and popular "reality" shows) have conveyed several overlapping political messages, which have accomplished several mutually reinforcing tasks of the White Reconstructionist agenda that are relevant to our discussion here: (1) the staunch criminalization of particular political practices embodied by radical and otherwise critically "dissenting" activists, intellectuals, and ordinary people of color; this is to say, when *racially pathologized bodies* take on political activities critical of US state violence (say, normalized police brutality/homicide, militarized misogyny, or colonialist occupation) or attempt to dislodge the presumed stability and "peace" of white civil society (through militant antiracist organizing or progressive anti–(state) racial violence campaigns), they are subjected to the enormous weight of a *state and cultural* apparatus that defines them as "criminals" (e.g., terrorists, rioters, gang members) and, therefore, as essentially *opportunistic, misled, apolitical,* or even *amoral* social actors; (2) the fundamental political constriction—through everything from restrictive tax laws on community-based organizations to the arbitrary enforcement of repressive laws banning certain forms of public congregation (for example, the California "antigang" statutes that have effectively criminalized Black and Brown public existence on a massive scale)—of the appropriate avenues and protocols of agitation for social change, which drastically delimits the form and substance that socially transformative and liberationist activisms can assume in both the short and long terms; and (3) the state-facilitated and fundamentally *punitive* bureaucratization of social change and dissent, which tends to create an *institutionalized* inside/outside to aspiring social movements by funneling activists into the hierarchical rituals and restrictive professionalism of discrete campaigns, think tanks, and organizations, outside of which it is usually profoundly difficult to organize a critical mass of political movement (due in significant part to the two aforementioned developments).

In this context, the structural and political limitations of current grassroots and progressive organizing in the United States has become stunningly evident

in light of the veritable explosion of private foundations as primary institutions through which to harness and restrict the potentials of US-based progressive activisms. Heavily dependent on the funding of such ostensibly liberal and progressive financial bodies as the Mellon, Ford, and Soros foundations, the very existence of many social justice organizations has often come to rest more on the effectiveness of professional (and amateur) grant writers than on skilled—much less "radical"—political educators and organizers. A 1997 *Atlantic Monthly* article entitled "Citizen 501(c)(3)" states, for example, that the net worth of such foundations was over $200 billion as of 1996, a growth of more than 400 percent since 1981. The article's author, Nicholas Lemann, goes on to write that in the United States, the raw size of private foundations, "along with their desire to affect the course of events in the United States and the world, has made foundations one of the handful of major [political] actors in our society—but they are the one that draws the least public attention."[7] As the foundation lifeline has sustained the NPIC's emergence into a primary component of US political life, the assimilation of political resistance projects into quasi-entrepreneurial, corporate-style ventures occurs under the threat of unruliness and antisocial "deviance" that rules Abu-Jamal's US "cavern of fear": arguably, forms of sustained grassroots social movement that *do not* rely on the material assets and institutionalized legitimacy of the NPIC have become largely *unimaginable* within the political culture of the current US Left. If anything, this culture is generally disciplined and ruled by the fundamental imperative to preserve the integrity and coherence of US white civil society, and the "ruling class" of philanthropic organizations and foundations may, at times, almost unilaterally determine whether certain activist commitments and practices are appropriate to their consensus vision of American "democracy."

The self-narrative of multibillionaire philanthropist George Soros—whom the PBS program *NOW* described as "the only American citizen with his own foreign policy"[8] brings candor and clarity to the societal mission of one well-known liberal philanthropic funder-patron:

> When I had made more money than I needed, I decided to set up a foundation. I reflected on what it was I really cared about. Having lived through both Nazi persecution and Communist oppression, I came to the conclusion that what was paramount for me was an open society. So I called the foundation the Open Society Fund, and I defined its objectives as opening up closed societies, making open societies more viable, and promoting a critical mode of thinking. That was in 1979....By now I have established a network of foundations that extends across more than twenty-five countries (not including China, where we shut down in 1989).[9]

Soros's conception of the "Open Society," fueled by his avowed disdain for laissez-faire capitalism, communism, and Nazism, privileges political dissent that works firmly within the constraints of bourgeois liberal democracy. The imperative to protect—and, in Soros's case, to selectively enable with funding—dissenting political projects emerges from the presumption that existing social, cultural, political, and economic institutions are in some way perfectible, and that such dissenting projects must not deviate from the unnamed "values" which serve as the ideological glue of civil society. Perhaps most important, the Open Society is premised on the idea that clashing political projects can and must be brought (forced?) into a vague state of reconciliation with one another.

> Instead of there being a dichotomy between open and closed, I see the open society as occupying a middle ground, where the rights of the individual are safeguarded *but where there are some shared values that hold society together* [emphasis added]. I envisage the open society as a society open to improvement. We start with the recognition of our own fallibility, which extends not only to our mental constructs but also to our institutions. What is imperfect can be improved, by a process of trial and error. The open society not only allows this process but actually encourages it, by insisting on freedom of expression and protecting dissent. The open society offers a vista of limitless progress....
>
> The Open Society merely provides a framework within which different views about social and political issues can be reconciled; it does not offer a firm view on social goals. If it did, it would not be an open society.[10]

Crucially, the formulaic, naïve vision of Soros's Open Society finds its condition of possibility in untied foundation purse strings, as "dissent" flowers into viability on the strength of a generous grant or two. The essential conservatism of Soros's manifesto obtains "common-sense" status within the liberal/progressive foundation industry by virtue of financial force, as his patronage reigns hegemonic among numerous organizations and emergent social movements.

Most important, the Open Society's narrative of reconciliation and societal perfection marginalizes radical forms of dissent which voice an *irreconcilable* antagonism to white supremacist patriarchy, neoliberalism, racialized state violence, and other structures of domination. Antonio Gramsci's prescient reflection on the formation of the hegemonic state as simultaneously an organizational, repressive, and *pedagogical* apparatus is instructive: "The State does have and request consent, but it also 'educates' this consent, by means of the political and syndical associations; these, however, are private organisms, left to the private initiative of the ruling class."[11]

Certainly, the historical record demonstrates that Soros and other foundation grants have enabled a breathtaking number of "left-of-center" campaigns and projects in the last 20 years. The question I wish to introduce here, how-

ever, is whether this enabling also exerts a disciplinary or repressive force on contemporary social movement organizations while nurturing a particular ideological and structural *allegiance* to state authority that preempts political radicalisms.

Social movement theorists John McCarthy, David Britt, and Mark Wolfson argue that the "channeling mechanisms" embodied by the non-profit industry "may now far outweigh the effect of direct social control by states in explaining the structural isomorphism, orthodox tactics, and moderate goals of much collective action in modern America."[12] That is, the overall bureaucratic formality and hierarchical (frequently elitist) structuring of the NPIC has institutionalized more than just a series of hoops through which aspiring social change activists must jump—these institutional characteristics, in fact, *dictate the political vistas of NPIC organizations themselves.* The form of the US Left is inseparable from its political content. The most obvious element of this kinder, gentler, industrialized repression is its bureaucratic incorporation of social change organizations into a "tangle of incentives"—such as postal privileges, tax-exempt status, and quick access to philanthropic funding apparatuses—made possible by state bestowal of "not-for-profit" status. Increasingly, avowedly progressive, radical, leftist, and even some self-declared "revolutionary" groups have found assimilation into this state-sanctioned organizational paradigm a practical route to institutionalization. Incorporation facilitates the establishment of a relatively stable financial and operational infrastructure while avoiding the transience, messiness, and possible legal complications of working under decentralized, informal, or "underground" auspices. The emergence of this state-proctored social movement industry "suggests an historical movement away from direct, cruder forms [of state repression], toward more subtle forms of state social control of social movements."[13]

Indeed, the US state learned from its encounters with the crest of radical and revolutionary liberationist movements of the 1960s and early 70s that endless, spectacular exercises of military and police repression against activists of color on the domestic front could potentially provoke broader local and global support for such struggles—it was in part because they were so dramatically subjected to violent and racist US state repression that Black, Native American, Puerto Rican, and other domestic liberationists were seen by significant sectors of the US and international public as legitimate freedom fighters, whose survival of the racist state pivoted on the mobilization of a global political solidarity. On the other hand, the US state has found in its coalition with the NPIC a far less spectacular, generally demilitarized, and still highly effective apparatus of political discipline and repression that (to this point) has not provoked a significant critical mass of opposition or political outrage.

Central to this sublimated state discipline and surveillance are the myriad regulatory mechanisms that serve to both accredit and disqualify non-profit social change groups. The Internal Revenue Service, tax laws of individual states, the US Postal Service, and independent auditors help keep bureaucratic order within—and the political lid on—what many theorists refer to as the post-1960s emergence of "new social movements." McCarthy, Britt, and Wolfson conclude that this historical development has rather sweeping consequences for the entirety of civil society:

> Another consequence of the growth of this system is a blurring of the boundaries between the state and society, between the civil and the political. Our analysis suggests that a decreasing proportion of local groups remain unpenetrated by the laws and regulations of the central state....Some analysts see civil space declining as the result of a fusion of the private and political by the activists of the "new" social movements who politicize more and more civil structures in the pursuit of more comprehensive moral and political goals. Our analysis views the construction as more the consequence of state penetration of the civil, and the consequences in more traditional terms—a narrowing and taming of the potential for broad dissent.[14]

The NPIC thus serves as the medium through which the state continues to exert a fundamental dominance over the political intercourse of the US Left, as well as US civil society more generally. Even and especially as organizations linked to the NPIC assert their relative autonomy from, and independence of, state influence, they remain fundamentally tethered to the state through extended structures of financial and political accountability. Jennifer Wolch's notion of a "shadow state" crystallizes this symbiosis between the state and social change organizations, gesturing toward a broader conception of the state's disciplinary power and surveillance capacities. According to Wolch, the structural and political interaction between the state and the non-profit industrial complex manifests as more than a relation of patronage, ideological repression, or institutional subordination. In excess of the expected organizational deference to state rules and regulations, social change groups are *constituted by* the operational paradigms of conventional state institutions, generating a reflection of state power in the same organizations that originally emerged to resist the very same state.

> In the United States, voluntary groups have gained resources and political clout by becoming a shadow state apparatus, but are increasingly subject to state-imposed regulation of their behavior....To the extent that the shadow state is emerging in particular places, there are implications for how voluntary organizations operate. The increasing importance of state funding for many voluntary organizations has been accompanied by deepening penetration by the state into voluntary group organization, management, and goals. We argue that the transformation of the voluntary sector into a shadow state apparatus could ultimately shackle its potential to create progressive social change.[15]

the npic as political "epistemology": the cooptation of political imagination

More insidious than the raw structural constraints exerted by the foundation/state/non-profit nexus is the way in which this new industry grounds an epistemology—literally, a *way of knowing* social change and resistance praxis—that is difficult to escape or rupture. To revisit Abu-Jamal's conception of the US "cavern of fear," the non-profit industrial complex has facilitated a bureaucratized *management of fear* that mitigates against the radical break with owning-class capital (read: foundation support) and hegemonic common sense (read: law and order) that might otherwise be posited as the necessary precondition for generating counter-hegemonic struggles. The racial and white supremacist fears of American civil society, in other words, *tend to be respected and institutionally assimilated* by a Left that fundamentally operates through the bureaucratic structure of the NPIC. As the distance between state authority and civil society collapses, the civic spaces for resistance and radical political experimentation disappear and disperse into places unheard, unseen, and untouched by the presumed audiences of the non-profit industry: arguably, the most vibrant sites of radical and proto-radical activity and organizing against racist US state violence and white supremacist civil society are condensing among populations that the NPIC cannot easily or fully incorporate. Organized, under-organized, and ad hoc movements of imprisoned, homeless, and undocumented people, as well as activists committed to working beneath and relatively autonomous of the NPIC's political apparatus, may well embody the beginnings of an alternative US-based praxis that displaces the NPIC's apparent domination of political discourse and possibility. Such a revitalization of radical political vision is both urgent and necessary in the current moment, especially when the US state's constant global displays of violence and impunity seem to imply that authentically radical challenges to its realms of domination are all but doomed.

Even a brief historical assessment of the social movement history reveals the devastating impact of state violence on the political imagination and organizing practices of progressive and radical political workers in the United States. Noam Chomsky, for example, argues that the watershed year of 1968 signified a turn in the institutional and discursive trajectory of state violence and repression, departing from the spectacular, peculiar imagery of more traditionally brutal repressive techniques. Framing the state's partial movement away from technologies of violent public spectacle (assassinations, militarized police raids and "riot control," and so forth) to a more complex, surreptitious, multidimensional apparatus of coercion, Chomsky's elaboration of a new "culture of terrorism" echoes Abu-Jamal's "cavern of fear." While Chomsky's critique focuses on an analysis

of the Iran-contra scandal in the mid-1980s, one also finds resonance with the state's attempts to preemptively contain and liquidate political disorder through the white supremacist criminalization and mass-based incarceration fostered by the Reagan administration's simultaneous initiation of a "War on Drugs." As the prison and policing apparatuses began to flower at the pinnacle of the Reagan-Bush bloc, so the culture of terrorism provided a context for their reproduction and expansion:

> As the Vietnam war escalated through the stages of subversion, state terrorism, and outright US aggression, disaffection and protest among the public became a significant force, preventing the government from declaring the national mobilization that would have been required to win what was becoming a major war.…The general dissidence, particularly among the youth, was perceived in elite circles as a serious problem by itself in 1968, while within the Pentagon, there was concern that sufficient military force be held in reserve to control domestic disorder if the US aggression visibly increased. The key phrase is "visibly"; it was fear of the public that led to the expansion of clandestine operations in those years, on the usual principle that in our form of democracy, if the public escapes from passivity, it must be deceived—for its own good.[16]

The key terms here are *clandestinity* and *deception*: the lessons of 1968 demonstrated that state and owning-class elites needed to maintain a delicate balance between two parallel, interdependent projects. On the one hand, repressive state violence had to be sustained under shrouds of secrecy to prevent the potential coagulation and crisis of a domestic dissent bloc. On the other hand, the state also acknowledged that within the discursive structure of a bourgeois liberal democracy, people had to be *convinced* that a "free" way of life pivoted on the state's ability to violently enforce it: that is, the state required a *pedagogy of "common sense"* that could effectively "teach" people to consent to its profoundly expansive and historically unprecedented methodologies of domestic and global warfare/militarization. The subtle change in the production of a hegemonic state—its absorption of social change movements and simultaneous construction of new strategies for the production of a popular consent—now manifests deeply and widely in the terrains of civil society. Civil institutions that once housed what Aldon Morris calls the "indigenous centers" of social movement and resistance organizing (e.g., schools, churches, families, friendship networks)[17] are now far more likely to exhibit the penetration of the state through a popular epistemology that considers the violent policing of order to be a necessary condition of social life generally.

The rearticulation of state coercion into the massive institutional and discursive formation of the post-Goldwater "law and order" society goes hand in hand with the slow, steady, and voluntary entry of establishment Left organizations

into a dependent relation (albeit uneasy and at times conflicted) with the neoliberal state and philanthropic foundations. This is not to suggest that a "pure" autonomy from state authority and discipline is attainable, but rather to argue that resistance and counter-hegemonic organizations dismantle the possibility of radical antagonism as they move into closer proximity to—and dependence on—the centers of state power and (philanthropic) capital. Wolch suggests several critical dimensions to this "dynamic of reduced autonomy":

1. The state will force voluntary groups to plan reactively, in response to new state policies and practices. This is in contrast to enabling groups to plan proactively, to decide on their own goals and objectives, and how to achieve them.
2. Contracts and grants will increasingly come with requirements for stringent, rigid, and quantitatively oriented approaches to planning, evaluation, and monitoring.
3. Those organizations unable to meet the expanding demands for planning will become increasingly marginalized and may not be able to secure state funding. Such standards for organizational practice will have structural effects, controlling the rise of antiestablishment social movements and pushing marginal groups to produce direct services instead of advocacy outputs.
4. Newly formed groups may be jeopardized by new government funding programs.
5. There may be little room for voluntary sector development and new initiatives. As more statutory agencies seek to use voluntary groups to provide basic community services, the ability of the voluntary sector to develop innovative approaches to social problems may be severely inhibited. Group activities may become aligned to funding agency needs and expectations for types of services to be delivered. In the process, the type of group output is likely to change toward direct services administered by professionals and away from advocacy and participation.[18]

Under current circumstances, organized dissent movements and organizations in the United States are often compelled to replicate the bureaucratic structures of the small business, large corporation, and state—creating centralized national offices, gathering political (and, at times, Hollywood) celebrities and luminaries onto boards of directors, and hiring "professional activists" whose salaries depend largely on the effectiveness of professional grant writers. It is worth repeating the tacit though no less far-reaching *political* implication of this historical development, insofar as social change campaigns, organizations, and aspiring movements increasingly articulate their reason for existence through the imperatives of *obtaining the financial support and civil sanction of liberal philanthropy and the state.* While it is beyond my intent to adequately address the multiple pragmatic and theoretical problems accompanying this political development, it is worth asking several interrelated questions that reflect on our current condition as

activists, scholars, writers, and intellectuals who are enmeshed in the disciplinary restrictions imposed by the NPIC: What are the inherent limits to the vistas of "social change" or transformation *mandated* by the US Left's incorporation into the NPIC and its emphasis on career/organizational security? Should the NPIC *itself* be conceptualized as a fundamental target of radical social transformation (whether it is to be seized, abolished, or some combination of both)? Can people struggling for survival, radical transformation, and liberation (including and beyond those who identify themselves as "activists") outside the tentacles of the NPIC generate new grassroots, community-based, or even "underground" structures and institutions capable of sustaining movements against the US racist state and white supremacist civil society?

beyond the npic: the lessons of anti-colonialism and "decolonization"

As this anthology attempts a critical and material intervention on the political stasis generated by the non-profit industrial complex, we can and should recall the recent history of socially disenfranchised and oppressed Black and Third World peoples whose demands for liberation and radical freedom (which I am distinguishing from the white bourgeois freedom that is hegemonic in the United States) have represented, for white civil society, the specter of its own undoing. I want to emphasize the importance of this contemporary liberationist lineage because I have observed a peculiar dynamic in the current political landscape that makes political fodder of this liberationist legacy. With increasing frequency, we are party (or participant) to a white liberal and "multicultural"/"people of color" liberal imagination that venerates and even fetishizes the iconography and rhetoric of contemporary Black and Third World liberation movements, and then proceeds to *incorporate* these images and vernaculars into the public presentation of foundation-funded liberal or progressive organizations. I have also observed and experienced how these organizations, in order to protect their non-profit status and marketability to liberal foundations, actively self-police against members' deviations from their essentially reformist agendas, while continuing to appropriate the language and imagery of historical revolutionaries. Having lived in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1995 to 2001, which is in many ways the national hub of the progressive "wing" of the NPIC, I would name some of those organizations (many of which are defunct) here, but the list would be too long. Suffice it to say that these non-profit groups often exhibit(ed) a political practice that is, to appropriate and corrupt a phrase from fellow contributor Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *radical in form, but liberal in content.*[19]

In this vein, Robert Allen surmises that the emergence of a white liberal hegemony over the non-profit industry during the 1970s was an explicit attempt—in

fact, an authentic conspiracy of collaboration among philanthropists and state officials, including local police and federal administrators—to dissipate the incisive and radical critique of US white supremacist capitalism, the white supremacist state, and white civil society that was spreading in the wake of domestic Black and Third World liberation movements. What Allen does not explicitly state, although he does imply, is that the rise of the white liberal philanthropic establishment had lasting political effects that ultimately equaled (and in some ways surpassed) the most immediate repressive outcomes of COINTELPRO and its offspring. It is the *paradigm-shaping political influence* of the post-1970s white philanthropic renaissance that remains the durable and generally underanalyzed legacy of late 20th-century White Reconstruction.

My point, at the risk of stating the historically obvious, is that the production of the white liberal—and now ostensibly "multicultural" though still white liberal hegemonic—non-profit industrial complex has actually facilitated, and continues to facilitate, the *violent* state-organized repression of radical and revolutionary elements within the Black and Third World liberation movements of the late 1960s and early 70s, as well as what remains of such liberation struggles today. In other words, the symbiosis between the racist state and white civil society that I discuss above is not simply a relationship of convenience—it is a *creative relation of power* that forms a restricted institutional space in which "dissent" movements may take place, *under penalty of militarized state repression* (a political violence that has, through the pedagogical work of the state, won a broad approval from US civil society more generally). I should be clear in what/whom I am implicating here: I am *not* speaking narrowly of the openly conservative and right-wing foundations, such as the Heritage Foundation, that so many on the establishment Left unanimously agree are fundamentally reactionary or politically retrograde. Rather, I am speaking to the putatively kind, benevolent, humanist and humanitarian liberal-progressive foundations that this very same establishment Left relies on, that is, the same foundations that often fund this Left's political work, scholarship, and activism—like Ford, Soros, and Mellon, for example. It seems that when one attempts to engage a critical discussion regarding the political problems of working with these and other foundations, and especially when one is interested in naming them as the gently repressive "evil" cousins of the more prototypically evil right-wing foundations, the establishment Left becomes profoundly defensive of its financial patrons. I would argue that this is a liberal-progressive vision that marginalizes the radical, revolutionary, and proto-revolutionary forms of activism, insurrection, and resistance that refuse to participate in the Soros charade of "shared values," and are uninterested in trying to "improve the imperfect." The social truth of the existing society is that it is *based on* the production of massive, unequal, and hierarchically organized

disenfranchisement, suffering, and death of those populations who are targeted for containment and political/social liquidation—a violent social order produced under the dictates of "democracy," "peace," "security," and "justice" that form the *historical and political foundations* of the very same white civil society on which the NPIC Left is based.

If we take seriously, for the sake of argument, the political analysis articulated by Palestinians struggling against the Israeli occupation, or that of imprisoned radical intellectuals/activists and their free-world allies desperately fighting to dismantle and abolish the prison industrial complex, or that of Indigenous peoples worldwide who, to paraphrase Haunani-Kay Trask, are literally fighting against their own planned obsolescence,[20] then it should become clear that the Soros philosophy of the Open Society, along with other liberal foundation social imaginaries, are at best philanthropic vanities. At worst, we can accuse the Soros, Ford, Mellon, and Rockefeller foundations, and their ilk of NGOs and non-profit organizations, of accompanying and facilitating these massive structures of human domination, which simply cannot be reformed or "reconciled" in a manner that legitimates anything approaching a vision of liberation or radical freedom.

While many professional intellectuals (academics, lawyers, teachers, progressive policy think tank members, journalists), community-based social change organizations, non-profit progressive groups, student activists, and others in the establishment Left pay some attention to the unmediated violence waged by state formations (whether official agents of state military power or its unofficial liaisons) on targeted individuals and communities, the implicit *theoretical* assumptions guiding much of this political-intellectual work have tended to *pathologize* state violence, rendering it as the scary illegitimate offspring of a right-wing hegemony. The logical extension of this political analysis is the notion that the periodic, spectacular materialization of direct relations of force are the *symptomatic* and extreme evidence of some deeper set of societal flaws. In fact, the treatment of state violence as a *nonessential facet* of the US social formation is the discursive requirement for the establishment Left's strained attempts at political dialogue with its more hegemonic political antagonists: whether they are police, wardens, judges, legislators, or foundations. In this way, a principled and *radical* opposition to both the material actuality and political legitimacy of racist US state violence—which is inescapably a principled and radical opposition to the existence and legitimacy of the US state itself—is constantly deferred in favor of more "practical" or "winnable" campaigns and demands.

There is thus a particular historical urgency in the current struggle for new vernaculars that *disarticulate* the multilayered, taken-for-granted state practices of punishment, repression, and retribution from common notions of justice, peace, and the good society. Arguably, it is this difficult and dangerous task of

disarticulation, specifically the displacement of a powerful, socially determinant "law and order" common sense,[21] that remains the most undertheorized dimension of contemporary struggles for social transformation. A generalized climate of (moral) defensiveness, political retreat, and pragmatic antiradicalism permeates the current critical discourse, such that the political and historical ground ceded to the punitive state and its defender-advocates mitigates against the flowering of new and creative knowledge productions. Antagonistic, radical, and proto-radical political practices—spurred by the desire to resist and abolish the normalized violence and undeclared domestic warfare of the American state—remain politically latent and deeply criminalized in the current social formation.

While the establishment Left conceptualizes its array of incorporated, entrepreneurial, non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations and NGOs as the fortified command center of progressive social justice movements within civil society, I remain constantly disturbed by the manner in which this political apparatus, the NPIC, perversely reproduces a dialectic of death. That is, the NPIC's (and by extension the establishment Left's) commitment to *maintaining* the essential social and political structures of civil society (meaning institutions, as well as ways of thinking) reproduces and enables the most vicious and insidious forms of state and state-sanctioned oppression and repression—by way of my previous examples, Israeli occupation, mass-based imprisonment, and the ongoing genocide of indigenous peoples. I will conclude this essay with a historical allegory of sorts.

Albert Memmi, in his anticolonialist meditation *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965), centrally addressed the *problem of presence* that marked the typological white supremacist domination of the colony. The colonizer—historically and prototypically, the categorical white man to whom many such theorists refer—ultimately found the Native indispensable, and not just because he could siphon and steal the Native's labor and other "natural" resources. The Native's indispensability was found, rather, in his/her bodily presence, which was nothing less than the affirmation of life's materiality for the settler. Memmi contends that it was through this very presence that whiteness found its form of articulation, its passage from the realm of the imaginary to the grittiness of material relation. Of the settler white man, Memmi writes,

> He knew, of course, that the colony was not peopled exclusively by colonists or colonizers. He even had some idea of the colonized from his childhood books; he has seen a documentary movie on some of their customs, preferably chosen to show their peculiarity. But the fact remained that those men belonged to the realms of the imagination. . . . He had been a little worried about them when he too had decided to move to a colony, but no more so than he was about the climate, which might be unfavorable, or the water, which was said to contain too much limestone. Suddenly these men [*sic*] were no longer a simple component of geographical or historical décor. They assumed a place in his life.

> *He cannot even resolve to avoid them. He must constantly live in relation to them, for it is this very alliance which enables him to lead the life which he decided to look for in the colonies; it is this relationship which is lucrative, which creates privilege* [emphasis added].[22]

The white colonizer was consistently unsettled by the movement between the two primary requirements of the white colony and its underlying processes of conquest: the extermination of indigenous human societies, and the political-cultural naturalization of that very same (deeply unnatural) process. Memmi expounds on the dynamic and durable relationship between these forms of domination, ultimately arguing that the containment and strategic (social and physical) elimination of targeted populations is inseparable from the global ideology of Euro-American colonial domination that posits its sites of conquest as infinitely, "naturally" available for white settlement. Here, we might think about the connectedness between Memmi's definition of the colonial power relation and the current conditions of possibility for white civil society in the alleged aftermath of the colonial epoch.

The forced proximity between settlers and natives, or white civil society and its resident aliens, entails a historically persistent engagement between categories of humans generally defined by the colonizer as existential opposites. This intimacy defines the core antisociality of colonial conquest and the living history it has constructed: that is, contrary to more vulgar theorizations, the colonizer is not *simply* interested in ridding of the colonized, breaking them from indigenous attachments (to land, culture, community), or exploiting their bodies for industrial, domestic, or sexual labor. Memmi's colonizer (and liberation theorist Frantz Fanon's "settler") also desires an antisocial "human" relation, a structured dialogue with the colonized that performs a kind of autoerotic drama for the colonizer, a production of pleasure that both draws upon and maintains a distinct power structure.

Such is the partial premise for Fanon's contemporaneous meditation on the *war of social truths* that rages beneath the normalized violence of any such condition of domesticated domination and structured political dialogue. For Fanon, it is the Manichaean relation between colonized and colonizer, "native" and "settler," that conditions the subaltern truths of both imminent and manifest insurgencies. Speaking to the anticolonialist nationalism of the Algerian revolution, Fanon writes,

> The problem of truth ought also to be considered. In every age, among the people truth is the property of the national cause. No absolute verity, no discourse on the purity of the soul, can shake this position. The native replies to the living lie of the colonial situation by an equal falsehood. His dealings with his fellow-nationals are open; they are strained and incomprehensible with regard to the

> settlers. Truth is that which hurries on the break-up of the colonialist regime; it is that which promotes the emergence of the nation; it is all that protects the natives, and ruins the foreigners. In this colonialist context there is no truthful behavior: and the good is quite simply that which is evil for "them."[23]

Truth, for Fanon, is precisely that which generates and multiplies the historical possibility of disruptive, subversive movement against colonial oppression. The evident rhetoric of oppositionality, of the subaltern "good" that *necessarily* materializes "evil" (or criminal) in the eyes of domination, offers a stunning departure from the language of negotiation, dialogue, progress, moderation, and peace that has become hegemonic in discourses of social change and social justice, inside and outside the United States. Perhaps most important, the political language of opposition is premised on its open-endedness and contingency, a particular refusal to soothe the anxiety generated in the attempt to displace a condition of violent peace for the sake of something else, a world beyond agendas, platforms, funding structures, and practical proposals. There are no guarantees, or arrogant expectations, of an ultimate state of liberation awaiting on the other side of the politically immediate struggle against the settler colony.

We might, for a fleeting moment, conceptualize the emergence of the NPIC as an institutionalization and industrialization of a banal, liberal political dialogue that constantly disciplines us into conceding the urgent challenges of a political radicalism that fundamentally challenges the existence of the US as a white settler society. The NPIC is not wholly unlike the institutional apparatus of neocolonialism, in which former and potential anticolonial revolutionaries are "professionalized" and granted opportunities within a labyrinthine state-proctored bureaucracy that ultimately reproduces the essential coherence of the neocolonial relation of power itself. The NPIC's well-funded litany of "social justice" agendas, platforms, mission statements, and campaigns offers a veritable smorgasbord of political guarantees that feeds on our cynicism and encourages a misled political faith that stridently bypasses the fundamental relations of dominance that structure our everyday existence in the United States: perhaps it is time that we formulate critical strategies that fully comprehend the NPIC *as the institutionalization of a relation of dominance* and attempt to disrupt and transform the fundamental structures and principles *of a white supremacist US civil society*, as well as the US racist state.

notes

1 Mumia Abu-Jamal, "The Industry of Fear," open correspondence to Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex, July 1998.

2 Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (1969; repr., Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990). An excerpt from *Black Awakening* is reprinted in this volume.

3 Barry Goldwater, acceptance speech, 28th Republican National Convention, San Francisco, CA, July 16, 1964.

4 Some useful background texts include: Jael Silliman and Anannya Bhattacharjee, eds., *Policing the National Body: Race, Gender and Criminalization in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002); Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso Press, 2000); Ted Gest, *Crime and Politics: Big Government's Erratic Campaign for Law and Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Jill Nelson, ed., *Police Brutality: An Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000); Stuart Hall, et. al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978).

5 See Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), 1–62.

6 See generally Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and the Secrets* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992).

7 Nicholas Lemann, "Citizen 501(c)(3)," *The Atlantic Monthly* 279, no. 2 (February 1997), http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97feb/5013c/5013c.htm.

8 George Soros, interview by David Brancaccio, *Now*, PBS, September 12, 2003, transcript, http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcript_soros.html.

9 George Soros, "The Capitalist Threat," *The Atlantic Monthly* 279, no. 2 (February 1997), http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97feb/capital/capital.htm.

10 Ibid.

11 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1995), 259.

12 John McCarthy, David Britt, and Mark Wolfson, "The Institutional Channeling of Social Movements by the State in the United States," *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 13 (1991): 48.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Jennifer R. Wolch, *The Shadow State: Government and Voluntary Sector in Transition* (New York: The Foundation Center, 1990), 15.

16 Noam Chomsky, *The Culture of Terrorism* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), 6.

17 See Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

18 Wolch, *The Shadow State*, 206–207.

19 Ruth Wilson Gilmore has often spoken of the generally underexplored and undertheorized political possibilities in engaging organizing strategies that are "conservative in form, but radical in content." She speaks of such strategies manifesting in historically conservative spaces, such as the church or mosque, while articulating a political critique and praxis that envisions radical social transformation.

20 See Haunani-Kay Trask, "The New World Order," in *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 58–63.

21 My use of the term *common sense* derives from Antonio Gramsci's conception of the assumptions, truths, and general faiths that predominate in a given social formation or hegemony.

22 Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (New York: Orion Press, 1965), 7–8.

23 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963), 50.