The topic that was suggested, which I’m very happy to talk about, is "Democracy and Education." The phrase democracy and education immediately brings to mind the life and work and thought of one of the outstanding thinkers of the past century, John Dewey, who devoted the greater part of his life and his thought to this array of issues. I guess I should confess a special interest. This thought was a strong influence on me in my formative years—in fact, from about age two on, for a variety of reasons that I won’t go into but are real. For much of his life—he was more skeptical—Dewey seems to have felt that reforms in early education could be in themselves a major lever of social change. They could lead the way to a more just and free society, a society in which, in his words, "the ultimate aim of production is not production of goods, but the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality." This basic commitment, which runs through all of Dewey’s work and thought, is profoundly at odds with the two leading currents of modern social intellectual life; one, strong in his day—he was writing in the 1920s and 1930s about these things—is associated with the command economies in Eastern Europe, the systems created by Lenin and Trotsky and turned into an even greater monstrosity by Stalin. The other, the state capitalist industrial society being constructed in the U.S. and much of the West, with the effective rule of private power. These two systems are similar in some fundamental ways, including ideologically. Both were, and one of them remains, deeply authoritarian in fundamental commitment, and both were very sharply and dramatically
human beings whose values were not accumulation and domination but, rather, free association on terms of equality and sharing and cooperation, participating on equal terms to achieve common goals that were democratically conceived. There was only contempt for what Adam Smith called the "vile maxim of the masters of mankind, all for ourselves, and nothing for other people," the guiding principle that nowadays we're taught to admire and revere, as traditional values have eroded under unrelenting attack, the so-called conservatism leading the onslaught in recent decades.

It's work taking time to notice how sharp and dramatic is the clash of values between, on the one hand, the humanistic conception that runs from the Enlightenment up to leading twentieth-century figures like Russell and Dewey and, on the other hand, the prevailing doctrines of today, for doctrines that were denounced by Adam Smith as the "vile maxim" and also denounced by the lively and vibrant working-class press of over a century ago, which condemned what it called the "new spirit of the age," gain wealth, forgetting all but self"—Smith's "vile maxim. It's quite remarkable to trace the evolution of values from a precapitalist thinker like Adam Smith, with his stress on sympathy and the goal of perfect equality and the basic human right to creative work, and contrast that and move on to the present to those who laud the "new spirit of the age," sometimes rather shamelessly invoking Adam Smith's name. For example, Nobel Prize-winning economist James Buchanan, who writes that what each person seeks in an "ideal situation" is "mastery over a world of slaves." That's what you seek, in case you hadn't noticed, something that Adam Smith would have regarded as simply pathological.

The best book I know of on Adam Smith's actual thought (Adam Smith and His Legacy for Modern Capitalism) is written by a professor here at Loyola, Patricia Wethane. Of course, it's always best to read the original.

One of the most dramatic Illustrations of the "new spirit of the age" and its values is the commentary that's now in the press on the difficulties we face in uplifting the people of Eastern Europe. As you know, we're now extending to them, our new beneficiaries, the loving care that we've levied on our wards elsewhere in Latin America and the Philippines and so on, with consequences that are dramatically clear and consistent in these horror chambers but also are miraculously free of any lessons
about what we are and what we do. One might ask why. In any event, we are now proceeding to uplift the people liberated from communism as we've in the past liberated Haitians and Brazilians and Guatemalans and Filipinos and Native Americans and African slaves and so on. The New York Times is currently running an interesting series of articles on these different problems. They give some interesting insight into the prevailing values. There was an article on East Germany, for example, written by Steven Kieffer. It opens by quoting a priest who was one of the leaders of the popular protests against the communist regime in East Germany. He describes the growing concerns there about what's happening to the society. He says, "Brutal competition and the lust for money are destroying our sense of community, and almost everyone feels a level of fear or depression or insecurity" as they masure the new spirit of the age in which we instruct the backward peoples of the world.

The next article turned to what we regarded as the showplace, the red, success story, Poland, written by Jane Perlez. The headline reads, "Fast and Slow Lanes on the Capitalist Road". The structure of the story is that some are getting the point but there are also some who are still backward. She gives one example of a good student and one example of a slow learner. The good student is the owner of a small factory that is a "thriving example" of the best in modern capitalist Poland. It produces intricately designed wedding gowns sold mostly to rich Germans and to that tiny sector of super-rich Poles. This is in a country where poverty has more than doubled since the reforms were instituted, according to a World Bank study last July, and incomes have dropped about 30 percent. However, the people who are hungry and jobless can look at the intricately designed wedding gowns in the store windows, appreciating the new spirit of the age, so it's understandable that Poland's hailed as the great success story for our achievements.

A good student explains that "people have to be taught to understand they must fight for themselves and can't rely on others." She is describing a training course she's running that's trying to instil American values among people who are still brainwashed with slogans like "I'm a worker. Who else is better?" They have got to get that out of their heads. A lot of people are better, including people who can design wedding gowns for rich Germans. That's the chosen illustration of the success story of American values. Then there are the failures, still on the slow ride on the capitalist road. Here she pits one as her example, a forty-year-old coal miner who "sits in his wood-paneled living room admiring the fruits of his labor under socialism—a television set, comfortable furniture, a shiny, modern kitchen," and he wonders "why he's at home, jobless and dependent on welfare payments," having not yet absorbed the new spirit of the age, gain wealth, forgetting all he's self, and not "I'm a miner. Who else is better?" The story goes on like that. It's frustrating to read and to see what's taken for granted.

What's happening in Eastern Europe recapitulates what's gone on in our Third World domains for a long time and falls into place in a much longer story. It's very familiar from our own history and the history of England before us. It looks like a recent book, by a distinguished Yale University labor historian, David Montgomery, in which he points out that modern America was created over the protests of its working people. He's quite right. Those protests were vigorous and outspoken, particularly in the working class and community press that flourished in the U.S. from the early nineteenth century up until the 1930s, when it was finally destroyed by private power, as its counterpart in England was about ten years later. The first major study of this topic was in 1924 by Norman Ware. It still makes very illuminating reading. It was published here in Chicago and reprinted very recently by Ivan Dee, a local publisher. It's very much worth reading. It's a work that is off very substantial study in social history.

What Ware describes, looking mostly at the labor press, is how the values system that was advocated by private power had to be beaten just the ideals of ordinary people, who had to be taught to abandon normal human sentiments and to replace these with the new spirit of the age, as they called it. He reviews the mainly mid-nineteenth century working-class press, often, incidentally, run by working-class writers. The themes that run through it are constant for a long period. They are concerned with the themes that we call "degradation" and loss of dignity and independence, loss of self-respect, the decline of the worker as a person, the sharp decline in cultural level and cultural attainments as workers were subjected to what they called "wage slavery," which they regarded as not very different from the chattel slavery they had fought to uproot during the Civil War. Particularly dramatic and quite significant to today's problems was the sharp decline in what we call "high culture," reading of classics and
as it is possible for a human creature to be." He based his rather advanced advocacy of markets on the thesis that if conditions were truly free, markets would lead to perfect equality. That was their moral justification. All of this has been forgotten by the bought priesthood, who has a rather different tale to tell.

Dewey and Russell are two of the leading twentieth-century inheritors of this tradition, with its roots in the Enlightenment and classical liberalism. Even more interesting is the inspiring record of struggle and organization and protest by working men and women since the early nineteenth century as they sought to win freedom and justice and to retain the rights that they had once had as the new despotism of state-supported private power extended its sway.

The basic issue was formulated with a good deal of clarity by Thomas Jefferson around 1816. This was before the Industrial Revolution had really taken root in the former colonies, but you could begin to see the developments. In his later years, observing what was happening, Jefferson had rather serious concerns about the fate of the democratic experiment. He feared the rise of a new form of absolutism that was more ominous than what had been overthrown in the American Revolution, in which he was of course a leader. Jefferson distinguished in his later years between what he called "aristocrats" and "democrats." The aristocrats are "those who fear and distrust the people, and wish to draw all powers from them into the hands of the higher classes." The democrats, in contrast, "identify with the people, have confidence in them, cherish and consider them as the honest and safe depositary of the public interest," if not always "the most wise." The aristocrats of his day were the advocates of the rising capitalist state, which Jefferson regarded with much disdain, clearly recognizing the quite obvious contradiction between democracy and capitalism, or more accurately what we might call really existing capitalism, that is, guided and subsidized by powerful developmental states, as it was in England and the U.S. and indeed everywhere else.

This fundamental contradiction was enhanced as new corporate structures were granted increasing powers, not by democratic procedures but mainly by courts and lawyers who converted what Jefferson called the "banking institutions and monied corporations," which he said would destroy freedom and which he could barely see the beginnings of
Robert Lansing—attitudes that led to Wilson’s Red Scare, as it was called, which destroyed labor and independent thought for a decade. Lansing warned of the danger of allowing the “ignorant and incapable mass of humanity to become ‘dominant in the earth’ or even influential, as he believed the Bolsheviks intended. That’s the hysterical and utterly erroneous reaction that’s pretty standard among people who feel that their power is threatened.

Those concerns were articulated very clearly by progressive intellectuals of the period, maybe the leading one being Walter Lippmann in his essays on democracy, satirical in the 1920s. Lippmann was also the dean of American journalism and one of the most distinguished commentators on public affairs for many years. He advised that “the public must be put in its place” so that the “responsible men” may “live free of the tangle and the roar of a bewitched herd;” Hamilton’s breech. In democracy, Lippmann held, these “ignorant and middle-class outsiders” do have a “function.” Their function is to be “intermediary operators of action” but not “participants.” They are to lend their weight periodically to some member of the leadership class, that’s called elections, and then they are supposed to return to their private concerns. In fact, similar notions became part of mainstream academic theory at about the same time.

In the presidential address to the American Political Science Association in 1924 William Shepley argued that government should be the hands of “an anocracy of intellect and power,” while the “ignorant, the uninformed and the antisocial elements” must not be permitted to control elections, as he massively believed they had done in the past. One of the founders of modern political science, Harold Lasswell, one of the founders of the field of communications, in fact, wrote in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences in 1933 or 1934 that modern techniques of propaganda, which had been impressively refined by Wilsonian liberals, provided the way to keep the public in line.

Wilson’s World War I achievements in propaganda impressed others, including Adolf Hitler. But crucially they impressed the American business community, that led to a huge expansion of the public-relations industry which was dedicated to controlling the public mind, as advocates used to put it in more honest days, just as writing in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences in 1933, Lasswell described what he was talking about as propaganda. We don’t use that term. We’re more sophisticated.
As a political scientist, Laswell advocated more sophisticated use of this new technique of control of the general public that was provided by modern propaganda. That would be said, enable the intelligent men of the community, the natural rulers, to overcome the threat of the great beast who may undermine order because of, in Laswell's terms, "the ignorance and stupidity of the masses." We should not succumb to "democratic dogmatism about men being the best judges of their own interests." The best judges are the elites, who must be ensured the means to impose their will for the common good. Jefferson's aristocrats, in other words.

Lippmann and Laswell represent the more liberal, progressive fringe of opinion, which grants the beast at least a spectator role. At the reactionary end you get those who are mislabeled conservatives in contemporary newspapers. So the Reaganist statist reactionaries thought that the public, the beast, shouldn't even have the spectator role. That explains their fascination with clandestine terror operations, which were not secret to anybody except the American public, certainly not to their victims. Clandestine terror operations were designed to leave the domestic population ignorant. They also advocated absolutely unprecedented measures of censorship and agitation and other measures to ensure that the powerful and interventionist state that they fostered would serve as a welfare state for the rich and not troubled by the rabble. The rage increase in business propagandists at the universities by right-wing foundations and other tendencies in the current period are other manifestations of the same concerns. These concerns were awakened by what liberal elites had called the "crisis of democracy" that developed in the 1960s, when previously marginalized and apathetic sectors of the population, like women, and young people and old people and working people and so on, sought to enter the public arena, where they have no right to be, as all right-thinking aristocrats understand.

John Dewey was one of the relics of the Enlightenment classical liberal tradition who opposed the rule of the wise, the onslaught of the Jeffersonian aristocrats, whether they found their place on the reactionary or the liberal part of this very narrow ideological spectrum. Dewey understood clearly that "politics is the shadow cast on society by big business," and as long as this is so, "attenuation of the shadow will not change the substance." Meaning, reforms are of limited utility. Democracy requires that the source of the shadow be removed not only because of its domination of the political arena but because the very institutions of private power undermine democracy and freedom. Dewey was very explicit about the antidemocratic power that he had in mind. To quote him, "Power today"—this is the 1920s—"resides in control of the means of production, exchange, publicity, transportation and communication. Whoever owns them rules the life of the country," even if democratic forms remain. "Business for private profit through private control of banking, land, industry, reinforced by control of the press, press agents and other means of publicity and propaganda," that is the system of actual power, the source of coercion and control, and until it's unraveled we can't talk seriously about democracy and freedom. Education, he hoped, of the kind he was talking about, the production of free human beings, would be one of the means of redeeming this absolutist monstrosity.

In a free and democratic society, Dewey held, workers should be "the masters of their own industrial fate," not tools rented by employers. He agreed on fundamental issues with the founders of classical liberalism and with the democratic and libertarian sentiments that animated the popular working-class movements from the early Industrial Revolution until they were finally beaten down by a combination of violence and propaganda. In the field of education, therefore, Dewey held that it is "illiberal and immoral" to train children to work "not freely and intelligently" but for the sake of the work itself, in which case their activity is "not free because not freely participated in." Again the conception of classical liberalism and the workers' movements. Therefore, Dewey held, industry must also change from a feudalistic to a democratic social order" based on control by working people and free association, again, traditional anarchist ideals with their source in classical liberalism and the Enlightenment.

As the doctrinal system has narrowed under the assault of private power, particularly in the past few decades, these fundamental libertarian values and principles now sound exotic and extreme, perhaps even anti-American, to become one of the terms of contemporary totalitarian thought in the West. Given these changes, it's useful to remember that the kind of ideas that Dewey was expressing are as American as apple
Hewlett describes the Anglo-American disaster for children and families as attributable to the ideological preference for free markets. Hewlett is only half right, in my opinion. Reagan's conservatism opposed free markets. It did advocate markets for the poor, but it went well beyond even its statist predecessors in demanding and winning a very high level of public subsidy and state protection for the rich. Whatever you choose to call this utopian ideology, it is unfair to stigmatize the good name of conservatism by applying it to this particular form of violent and lawless and reactionary statute. Call it what you like, but it is not conservatism. It is not the free market. However, Hewlett is quite right in identifying the free market as the source of the disaster for families and children. And there isn't much doubt of the effects of what Hewlett calls the "anti-child spasm that is loose in these lands," in the Anglo-American lands, most dramatically in the U.S., but also Britain. This "neglect-filled Anglo-American model" based on market discipline for the poor has hugely privileged child rearing while making it effectively impossible for most of the population to raise children. That's been the combined goal and policy of Reaganite conservatism and the Thatcherite analogue. The result is, of course, a disaster for children and families.

Continuing, Hewlett points out, "in the much more supportive European model, social policy has strengthened rather than weakened support systems for families and children. It's no secret, except as usual to readers of the press. As far as I'm aware, this 1993 study, rather critically relevant to our current concerns, has yet to be reviewed anywhere. It's not been, as featured in the New York Times, although the Times did devote last Sunday's book review section largely to this topic, with number for numbers about the fall of IQs, the decline of SAT scores, and so on and why might be causing it. Say, in the city of New York, where the social policies that have been pursued and backed by the Times have driven about 40 percent of the children below the poverty level, so that they're suffering malnutrition, disease, and so on. But it turns out that this is irrelevant to the decline in IQs, as is anything that Hewlett discusses in this Anglo-American neglect-filled model. What's relevant, it turns out, is bad genes. Somehow people are getting bad genes, and then there are various speculations about why this is. For example, maybe it's because black mothers don't nurture their children, and the reason is
maybe they evolved in Africa, where the climate was hostile. So those are maybe the reasons, and this is really serious, hardheaded science, and a diemocratic society will ignore all this as its peril, the reviewer says. Well-disciplined conservatives know well enough to steer away from the obvious factor, the ones rooted in very plain and clear social policy. They are perfectly evident to anybody with their head screwed on and happy to be discussed in considerable detail by a well-known economist in a UNICEF study that's not likely to see the light of day around here.

The facts are no secret. A blue-ribbon commission of the State Boards of Education and the American Medical Association reported, "Never before has an entire generation of children been less healthy, less cared for or less prepared for life than their parents were at the same age." That's a big shift in an industrial society. It's only in the Anglo-American societies where this antidote, antifamily spirit, has reigned for fifteen years under the guise of "conservatism" and family values. That's a real triumph for propaganda.

A symbolic expression of this disaster is that when Hewett wrote her book a year ago, 140 countries had ratified the international Convention on the Rights of the Child, but one had not: the U.S. That's a standard pacesetter for international conventions on human rights. However, just for fairness, it's only proper to add that Reagan conservative is catholic in its anichild, antifamily spirit. The World Health Organization voted to condemn the Nestle Corporation for aggressive marketing of infant formula, which kills plenty of children. The vote was 118 to 1; I'll have you to guess the one. However, this is quite minor compared with what the World Health Organization calls the "silent genocide" that's killing millions of children every year as a result of the free-market policies for the poor and the refusal of the rich to give aid. Again, the U.S. has one of the worst and most miserly records among the rich societies.

Another symbolic expression of this disaster is a new line of greeting cards by the Hallmark Corporation. One of them says, "Have a super day at school." That one, they tell you, is to be put under a box of cereal in the morning, so that when the children go off to school they'll have a warm and caring message. Another one says, "I wish I had more time to talk with you." That's one that you stick under the pillow at night when the kid goes to sleep alone. [Laughter] There are other such examples. In part this disaster for children and families is the result simply of falling wages. State corporate policy has been designed for the last years, especially under the Reagan administration, to enrich small sectors and to impoverish the majority, and it succeeded. It's had exactly the intended effect. That means that people have to work much longer hours to survive. For most of the population both parents have to work, and in fifty hours merely to provide necessities. Meanwhile, incidentally, corporate profits are zooming. Fortune magazine talks about the "dazzling" profits reaching new heights for the Fortune 500 even though sales are stagnating.

Another factor is job insecurity, what economists like to call "flexibility in the labor markets," which is a good thing under the reigning academic theology but a pretty rotten thing for human beings, whose fate doesn't enter into the calculations of other thinking. Flexibility means you better work extra hours, without knowing whether you have a job tomorrow, or else. There are no contracts and no rights. That's flexibility. We've got to get rid of market rigidities. Economists can explain it. When both parents are working extra hours, and for money on falling incomes, it doesn't take a great genius to predict the outcome. The statistics show them. You can read them in Hewell's UNICEF study if you like. It's perfectly obvious without reading them. What's going to happen. She reports that contact time, that is, actual time spent by parents with children, has declined sharply in the last twenty-five years in the Anglo-American societies, mostly in recent years. That's actually ten to twelve hours a week. What they call "high-quality time," time when you're not just doing something else, is declining. That leads to the destruction of family identity and values. It leads to sharply increased reliance on television for child supervision. It leads to what are called "latchkey children," kids who are alone, a factor in rising child alcoholism and drug use and in criminal violence against children by children and other obvious effects in health, education, ability to participate in a democratic society, even survival, and decline in IQs and IQs, but you're not supposed to notice that. That's bad news, remember.

None of these things is a law of nature. These are consciously selected social policies designed for particular goals, stately, enrich the Fortune 500 but impoverish others. In Europe, where conditions are more stringent but policy is not guided by the same antifamily, antichild
Chomsky on Multinationality

[Robert] Torricelli, calling for a cutoff of any trade with Cuba by any subsidiary of any American corporation or any foreign corporation that used any parts produced in the U.S. That is so obviously in violation of international law that George Bush vetoed it. However, he was forced to accept it when he was outflanked from the right by the Clintonites in the last election, so he did then allow it to go through. That went right to the United Nations, where the U.S. position was denounced by just about everybody. In the final vote, the U.S. could pick up only Israel, which is automatic, and they go Rumania for some reason. Everyone else voted against it. The U.S. position was defended by no one. It is an obvious violation of international law, as even Britain and others pointed out. But it doesn't matter. It's extremely important to carry out our anticommunist, antifamily spirit and our insistence on highly polarized societies everywhere we can go. If a foreign country under our control tries to go a different way, well, we'll take care of them, too.

That's now continuing. It's the kind of thing you can actually do something about if you like. In Chicago there are the Pastors for Peace and the Chicago-Cuba Coalition, which have another caravan going to Cuba to try to undermine the embargo and bring humanitarian aid, medicines, medical books, powdered milk for infants, and other assistance. They're in the phone book under Chicago-Cuba Coalition. You can look them up. Anyone who is interested in countering the anticommunist, antifamily spirit that reigns here and that we're exporting by violence elsewhere can do that, just as they can do plenty of things at home.

I should say that the effects of this latest democratic proposal, which went through, to strangle Cuba have recently been reviewed in this month's Chemical, October, of two leading American medical journals, Neurology and the Florida Journal of Medicine, which simply review the effects. They point out the obvious thing. It turns out that about 90 percent of the trade that was cut off by the Clinton-Torricelli bill was food and humanitarian aid, medicine, and things like that. For example, one Swedish company that was trying to export a water filtration device to create vaccines was blocked by the U.S. because there's some part in it that's American made. We really have to struggle them badly. We have to make sure that plenty of children die. One effect is a very sharp rise in infant mortality and child malnutrition. Another is a rise in neurological disease that's spread over Cuba that everyone pretended they didn't...
Dewey's observation that politics is the shadow cast on society by big business, which was incidentally also a truism to Adam Smith, has now become almost invisible. The force that casts the shadow has been pressed much removed by the ideological institutions and is so remote from consciousness that we're left with antipolitics. That's another severe blow to democracy and a grand gift to the absolutist and unaccountable systems of power that have reached levels that a Thomas Jefferson or John Dewey could scarcely imagine.

We have the usual choices. We can choose to be democrats in Thomas Jefferson's sense. We can choose to be aristocrats. The latter path is the easy one. That's the one that the institutions are designed to reward. It can bring rich rewards, give the locus of wealth and privilege and power and the ends that they're naturally seek. The other path, the path of the Jeffersonian democrats, is one of struggle, often defeat, but also rewards of a kind that can't even be imagined by those who succumb to the new spirit of the age, gain wealth, forgetting all but self. It's the same now as it was in 150 years ago when there was an attempt to drive it from the heads of the factory girls in Lowell and the craftsmen in Lawrence and so on. Today's world is very far from Thomas Jefferson's. The choices it offers, however, have not changed in any fundamental way.

NOTE

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