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# **The atomisation of the American Left: The unravelling of collectivism in protesting United States' Foreign Policy.**

A Thesis  
submitted in the fulfilment  
of the requirements for a  
**Masters of Philosophy  
In Political Science**  
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by

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## Abstract

This thesis addresses the question: has the rise of postmodernism and the New Social Movements essentially undermined and “individuated” the traditionally collectivist American Left? The thesis seeks to address the shift of degree, if any, of the American Left’s character as a collective force of dissent regarding, primarily, U.S. foreign policy. The approach of this thesis has been to examine two indicative and comparative case studies, two left-leaning activist groups that emerged spontaneously in the 1980s and 2000s in one of the most conservative areas of the United States, with a view to determining the impact of postmodernism and the New Social Movements on the attitudes and behaviours of the group members. The approach taken, for the purposes of this thesis, has been to investigate through non-random interviews, based upon an open-ended questionnaire, these activist groups protesting U.S. Foreign Policy. The research findings posit that the American Left has become atomised in regards to the central question and the rise of postmodernism and the New Social Movements have undermined and ‘individuated’ the traditionally collectivist American Left. This has been evident for some time as the diffusion of the New Social Movements from the 1970s onwards has seen the Left fragment into single issue groups. The American Left has become individuated and has migrated away from collectivism to what appears to be a postmodern sensibility, placing ever greater emphasis on self-development and individuality. The American Left has apparently retreated into forms of localism. For example: issues pertaining to municipalities, the academy and the arts. Also, the Left has had a visible presence through single-issue platforms such as: the environmental movement, the anti-nuclear movement, gay and lesbian rights and the feminist movement, to name but a few. Neo-liberals have strongly espoused free market doctrines from a fundamentalist perspective. Neoconservatives have advocated a vision for U.S. foreign policy based on “American values” and the projection of the Liberal “Democratic” project. Neoconservatives, too, possess a fundamentalist ardour. The American Left, by contrast, has found itself perpetually in defensive mode. Generally speaking, American leftists are supporters of the U.S. Democratic Party. The trajectory of the Democratic Party may be seen as having advocated for the cultural Left on the fringes of its social policy platform. However, few voices that espouse traditional Leftist values remain in its ranks. Therefore, the American left remains a voice in the wilderness buffeted by both the forces of Liberalism and Conservatism.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Research Methodology.....	24
Chapter One: The American Left: A Voice in The Wilderness	28
Socialism: An Overview .....	28
The New Left: The Voice of Dissent .....	30
The New Left’s Heritage: The American Old Left.....	33
Social Democratic Roots of the New Left: SDS and the League for Industrial Democracy .....	37
New Left: Rage against Authority Structures .....	39
A Propensity for Reflexivity .....	49
Herbert Marcuse: The Quest for Liberation.....	50
New Left Ferment and Post-Material Values.....	55
The New Social Movements and George McGovern: ‘Come Home America’ .....	56
A Change of Discourse: The Conservative Backlash .....	59
Chapter Two: America Transformed: The Emergence of the New Social Movements	63
The New Social Movement Paradigm .....	63
Sequential Waves Of New Movements Emanated From The 1960s.....	64
The Rise of New Centres of Power.....	65
Integrated Global Markets.....	66
Neoliberal Theoretical Concepts.....	67
Reagan’s Foreign Policy Towards Central America.....	70
Chapter Three: Rage against Reagan: Protesting U.S. Intervention in Central America	81
History of the Coalition for Central America .....	81
Working within the Liberal Democratic system .....	83
A Coalition of Individuals.....	88
Three distinct voices that emerged from the CCA.....	90
The Resonance of Post-material values .....	96
Continuity of Political Consciousness .....	99
Dissent in the Conservative Realm .....	100
Anti-War Movement Activists Experience the Travails of Opposition.....	101
CCA and Continuities with the New Left and New Social Movement Themes.....	104
Motivation Towards Action .....	120

Chapter Four: The Palouse Peace Coalition: Activism and Awareness	133
The Bush Doctrine: Going on the Offence .....	133
PPC: Reason For Being.....	135
Peace Vigils.....	137
Motivational Factors For Membership .....	141
Conclusion	151
Bibliography	156

## Introduction

Have the rise of postmodernism and the New Social Movements essentially undermined and 'individuated' the traditionally collectivist American Left? Leftism in the U.S. has long served as a critical, if constantly threatened, counterbalance to manifest rightist tendencies in American society. Given the enormous power and influence that the US has exercised in the world over the past 70 years, a fading of American leftism after the 1960s should thus be cause for global concern. The following thesis will explore two case studies of nominally leftist organisations that sprung up in the 1980s and early 2000s in one of the most conservative areas of the United States, with a view to examining the character and political nature of these apparently spontaneous groups as likely indicators of the wider condition of American leftism in the contemporary setting.

The American Left historically has put forward a critique of capitalism that has simultaneously called for transformation towards a more economically equitable society, as well as attempting to organise those on the left into a cohesive, collective and politically influential movement. Traditional socialist values of cooperation, community and solidarity have defined leftism in the United States, just as they have defined it elsewhere. Traditionally the American Left has understood that in order to achieve a more equitable society, capitalist structures would need to be transformed. Nowadays, such traditions of commonality and a belief in the possibility of a United States (U.S.) transformed have reached twilight. Has the sun has set on such common optimism for a better tomorrow? The American Left now remains a remnant of what it once was. Is this a permanent condition, or part of a wavelike pattern?

For over forty years the American Left has turned away from its earlier role as an oppositional voice in critiquing the structures of U.S. capitalism, towards a cacophony of voices speaking from the various elements of a fractured Left, and focused on single issues, primarily in resistance to U.S. foreign policy. The emphasis on single issues can be described as *identitarian politics*, the politics of difference. Meanwhile, its right wing counterparts have gathered strength and forged a collectivity, if often a deeply fractured one, under the auspices of the New Right. This project, rising out of the ashes of the defeat of Barry Goldwater in the 1964 Presidential election, gathered force and intensity, propelling Ronald Reagan to the Presidency in 1981.

The New Right has largely held its course and brought under its umbrella the powerful voting bloc of the Christian Right, as well as social and traditionalist rightist thought. Added to this union has also been a powerful neo-liberal project which reverberates with fundamentalist beliefs regarding the free-market. In comparison, the American Left, fractured, dislocated and equivocal, has failed to offer a counter-narrative, or even a counter-movement. Lacking coherence and a clear set of fundamental beliefs, the American Left have failed to penetrate the Democratic Party to any significant extent. The United States has politically shifted rightward while the Left, and occasionally the Right, have diffused into a myriad of single issue groups. Many commentators have observed this trajectory, particularly in the American Left. It has been described as lacking potency as a force for change in the political and economic spheres. Although fragmented and equivocal, the American Left tends to coalesce and become a more unified voice when the United States is involved in war. This is evinced by the anti-Vietnam war movement, the Contra Wars in Central America during the 1980s, and, more recently, conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Besides protesting U.S. foreign policy in more recent times, the American Left historically has not lacked vitality. The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century bore witness to the Industrial Workers of the World (the IWW, or the 'Wobblies') who advocated a cooperative brand of workplace democracy. Foner (1997) defines the Wobblies' promotion of Direct Action as: "dealing directly with the boss through your labour union. [The strike, in its different forms, is the best known example of 'direct action']" (Foner, 1997, p. 135). The Wobblies emerged at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, providing an activist voice for miners and lumbermen of the Western states of the U.S. Diggins (1973) describes the exploits of the Wobblies as providing an idiomatic, legendary narrative for the American Left. The Wobblies demonstrated an adventurous style of defiance that provided a resonant caricature of unified workers fronting workplace inequality (Diggins, 1973).

One of the pivotal figures of the American Left in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was Max Eastman (Diggins, 1973). Eastman, a prolific poet, writer and socialist activist, had a profound influence as a resident of Greenwich Village in New York City. A herculean figure in his time, Eastman was a contributor to the Leftist periodical, *The Masses*, as well as serving as an advocate for free love and birth control. Additionally, Eastman



was an influential philosopher in the promotion of women's suffrage<sup>1</sup> (Diggins, 1973). Eastman's earlier works contributed to the influential culture of Greenwich Village, which was to serve as a place of pilgrimage for many considered being a part of the American Left. Thinkers such as Eastman and Walter Lippman contributed to the American Left's awareness of the inequalities viewed as being caused by U.S. capitalist structures. Within this critique were keen advocates of social justice (Diggins, 1973).

The American Left was to experience perilous times in the post-World War II era. The Socialist Party of America (SPA), which enjoyed moderate political success earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, by the 1950s was racked by factionalism. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'New Deal' siphoned support and thus vitality from the SPA. Also, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), influential in the trade union movement in the 1930s and 1940s, experienced a dissipation of support brought about by a range of factors such as the 'Red Scare' of the 1950s. CPUSA's activities were closely monitored by federal law enforcement agencies. This saw many members vacate the organisation and adopt more moderate political tones. The CPUSA was also tainted by its adherence to Stalinism. The 1956 'Secret Speech' of Nikita Khrushchev revealed the realities of Stalin's regime and further diminished the standing of the CPUSA in the eyes of many American radicals. Moreover, the 1950s also saw the American Trade Union Movement lose its once radical edge and the movement became co-opted into the Cold War consensus of American politics. According to noted authors on the Left, Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau (1966), trade unionists had almost become synonymous with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and a confluence of events led Leftist radicals looking for an alternative to what the American Left had previously offered.

New voices were emerging that articulated a vision of an 'alternate' America. These voices promulgated new values of greater societal inclusiveness, tolerance, direct democracy and greater scope for expressions of individuality. These voices were personified by a burgeoning African-American civil rights movement, new public intellectuals such as C. Wright Mills, and poet Allan Ginsberg, famous for his 1957 poem *Howl*<sup>2</sup> (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Raskin, 2004). These were the new voices

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<sup>1</sup> Max Eastman later denounced his political radicalism and became an advocate for the free market and an avid anti-communist (Diggins, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Raskin (2004) "To those of us— I wasn't the only teenage beatnik in suburbia—who owned a copy, *Howl* conferred a strange power. Reading it brought initiation into a secret society. It bound us together and gave us a sense of identity as members of a new generation that

of dissent. In the face of a U.S. foreign policy which emphasised Soviet containment and global 'brushfire wars', enjoying both bipartisan and political support as well as public consensus, the new voices of dissent advocated pacifism. They rallied against establishment values of upward mobility and hierarchical status. They advocated a new style of politics conceptualised as 'direct democracy'. This was an attempt to disempower what they viewed as elitist institutions that blunted their democratic sensibilities. They envisaged a governing class more egalitarian in nature that was attentive to grass root movements. Lastly, the new voices of dissent were critical of a society which they claimed was enslaved by the ideals of mass consumption (Isserman and Kazin, 2000). In short, they were calling for a reform of society which would allow people to have greater control over the decisions that affected their lives. However these new voices of dissent wanted to steer the American left away from traditional conceptualisations of class analysis and economic materialism (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979).

The tenets of 'participatory democracy' implied a renewal of town hall meeting-style 'direct democracy'. Moreover, such calls proposed a vision of society which fostered institutions that were built along "more egalitarian lines" (Bacciocco, 1974, p. 56). A New Left organisation, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), posed a critique of American foreign policy that was complementary to its strident criticism of existing U.S. political structures.

The Civil Rights Movement, originating in the mid-1950s, was one of the foremost groups, along with the New Left, in articulating these new voices of dissent, and called for a society that recognised the rights of the marginalised (Lader, 1979; Isserman and Kazin, 2000). The Civil Rights Movement became a mass movement in the 1960s, and was a vehicle of dissent which, in broad terms, gave the American Left a sense of solidarity, from the events of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 to Martin Luther King's Poor People's Movement<sup>3</sup> in the mid-to-late 1960s. This movement primarily addressed institutionalised racism towards African-American

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had come of age in the wake of World War II and the atomic bomb, a generation that lived in the shadow of nuclear apocalypse. There was something wonderfully subversive about Howl, something the poet had hidden in the body of the poem because it was too dangerous to say openly, something we had to uncover and decode" (p. xi).

<sup>3</sup> McKnight (1998) notes that Martin Luther King's Poor People's Movement faced much opposition, opposition that stemmed from powerful elites: "While Hoover and his bureau elites may have been only one turn of the screw away from destroying King, the agency was still in a unique position in the 1960s to derail the struggle for racial justice and economic equality. Moreover, the FBI's sleeves-rolled-up campaign against King and the poor people's movement enjoyed added firepower because it was encouraged by Capitol Hill lawmakers and responsible government officials. Angered and frustrated that massive southern white resistance failed to smother the civil rights movement, congressional segregationists of every political hue and regional label took every legislative opportunity to rally behind the Hoover Bureau's law-and-order politics of race". (McKnight, 1998, p. 7)

people, particularly in the Southern states. Jim Crow laws, originating in the Nineteenth Century, had been an attempt to systematically deny African-Americans the right to vote. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s gathered support from wider groups on the American Left, such as the SDS (Diggins, 1973; Lader, 1979) to reduce the legacy of these laws.

McMillian and Buhle (2003) broadly define the nature of the New Left as being predominantly white, middle-class university students who were activists, protesting the Vietnam War and calling for a more democratic society.

Briefly, the New Left can be defined as a loosely organised, mostly white movement that promoted participatory democracy, crusaded for civil rights and various types of university reforms, and protested against the Vietnam War. It first began to crystallise in the early 1960s and then picked up steam toward the middle of the decade, following the Free Speech Movement and the escalating U.S. invasion of Vietnam, only to dwindle away in the early 1970s – several years after the evaporation of SDS. ‘The movement’ on the other hand, was a much larger constellation of social protest activity that either grew out of the New Left (e.g. gay liberation, radical feminism, and the hippie counterculture), or influenced and inspired the New Left (e.g. the civil rights movements). Indeed, throughout the 1960s New Left radicals often made this distinction themselves, defining their movement as mostly white and concerned with pragmatic political goals. (Buhle and McMillian. 2003 pp. 5-6)

The New Left contended that American society was in need of emancipation, and therefore advocated a style of grass roots, community-based action that gave participants an outlet to practise their individuality. Therefore, what Diggins (1973) refers to as the Old Left, which consisted of a collectivist, more articulated, classically-based socialism, differed in tenor to the New Left’s discourse (Diggins, 1973, p. 162). The New Left steered away from the teachings of Marx and Lenin. They embraced a humanistic, more individualistic existentialism that was indicative of an optimistic outlook as espoused by neo-Freudians such as Eric Fromm as well as ideals originally based on communitarian values gained through “progressive educationists” (Diggins, 1973, p. 162). They were imbued with idealism and optimism that created a mood that society could be transformed with individuals who had endless possibilities (Diggins, 1973, p. 162). Diggins (1973) notes that the ethos of the New Left was based on “... “fraternity” “honesty” and “love” ... [overcoming] the

"estrangement" of modern man" (p. 165). An apocalyptic mood also pervaded the New Left; many believed that they were living in perilous times of the Cold War and were facing the direct threat of nuclear warfare and that they would be in fact be the last generation (Bacciocco, 1974; Diggins, 1973, p. 165). The New Left were fierce advocates of a new foreign policy that would deescalate these tensions and calm their own individual anxieties (Bone, 1977; Diggins, 1973; Walter, 1992).

United States foreign policy cannot be underestimated as a factor that would pervade the lives of the New Left activists (Bacciocco, 1974; Diggins, 1973; Lader, 1979). The escalation of the Vietnam War in 1965 signalled a shift for SDS from focusing on domestic issues such as communities organising free speech at universities and the Civil Rights Movement, into a growing radical ferment in protesting and resisting the Vietnam War (Bacciocco, 1974; Diggins, 1973; Schulzinger, 1997). Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the predominant voice of the New Left in the 1960s, found much support across many societal spheres in protesting the Vietnam War (Diggins, 1973; Lader, 1979; Rising, 1987; Rossinow, 1998). The SDS addressed foreign policy concerns in its 1962 *Port Huron Statement* (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979). This was clearly expressed by the 1962 manifesto of SDS, which renounced and called for societal change regarding 'the military-industrial complex' (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). The SDS conceptualised that the military-industrial complex blunted many aspects of American life especially pertaining to social justice as well as impinging upon the freedom of personal expression (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979). The military-industrial complex was blamed for preventing progressive steps towards recognising minority group rights as well as restricting individual expression (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). The SDS, which had its roots in the student wing of the gradualist American Socialist Party, launched a campaign from the early 1960s to reform American political institutions (Bacciocco, 1974; Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Schulzinger, 1997).

It is perhaps not surprising that opposition to U.S. foreign policy became the central defining feature of American Leftism after the 1970s. Opposition to the Vietnam War in the 1960s had turned the New Left into a mass movement (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1179). This had begun as a moderate critique of U.S. foreign policy and elite institutions with an underlying emphasis on community and

egalitarianism but by 1967 had exploded into violent protests (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979; Walter, 1992). Opposition to the War had gathered intensity and fermented into open resistance with mass rallies attracting upwards of 400,000 people in the April 1967 mobilisation in New York City. San Francisco saw huge crowds of protestors who participated in burning draft cards as well as displaying other avenues of protest (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979; Schulzinger, 1997). As the Vietnam War intensified, the New Left reached for a more radical stance. One of the main critiques revolved around criticism of U.S. capitalism in cooperation with the U.S. government seeking new markets through what was termed 'third-world imperialism'. Broadly articulated, this doctrine stated the Cold War had allowed, through the use of proxies and allies, an attempt to encircle the Soviet Bloc. Therefore, the theory postulated that U.S. corporations could project themselves into new markets exercising proxy control of those markets especially in the Third World. Many in the New Left saw the Vietnam War as an example of what was termed 'free world imperialism'. It was postulated by New Left critics that under the guise of anti-Communism, the United States could exercise hegemonic power, co-opting resources from the Third World (Lader, 1979). The New Left further contended that excess capital from the United States did not need to be expanded into financial markets, particularly in the third world. Proponents of this thesis pointed out that the rapid expansion of American foreign investment since World War II had already grown by approximately \$110 billion (Lader, 1979).

The Vietnam War helped propel the SDS into a nationally recognised organisation and mass movement. This war and the draft presented most of the male University demographic with the real prospect of being drafted into the U.S. military to fight a war many did not identify with or for that matter want to risk their life for (Anderson, 1996; Baccioccio, 1974; Bone, 1977). Noted participant/observer of the American Left, Alexander Cockburn, regarded the draft as being a significant factor in the ferment of activist movement and resistance around the Vietnam War. Cockburn (2007) suggested that the prospect of going to war had a tendency to concentrate the voice of dissent, focusing its energies not only on resistance to existing U.S. foreign policy, but also to resisting legal requirements that by all accounts obligate an individual to fight in war. He also notes that war tends to have a galvanising effect on the American Left (Cockburn, 1997, pp. 29-38).

In the last four decades, under the umbrella of the American Left, a diverse range of single issue groups, loosely bound by the common thread of a broad vision for a more egalitarian and socially just society, have emerged and faded in a repeated, wavelike fashion (Cockburn, 1997, pp. 29-38). Cockburn (2007) acknowledged the disparate character of the American Left. He noted that protesting U.S. foreign policy and U.S. military action abroad, the central leitmotif of American leftism over the past several decades, had a strong tendency to galvanise the various fragments of the Left into an anti-war movement.

There are scores of overlapping 'lefts' in America, mustered in their separate struggles—for immigrants' rights, for public control of energy, against military recruitment. There are the anarchists, the Trotskyist groups. And when a war comes along, as it does with great regularity in America, they generally coalesce into an anti-war movement (Cockburn, 2007, p. 31).

The American Left is unique in its political trajectory in a comparative sense to other forms of leftist politics in the Western World. Since the 1960s, the many different constituents of the American Left have been observed to have championed a constellation of issues indicative mostly of the American *cultural* left. It currently operates in an environment shaped by a prevailing individualistic discourse. Cullen (2003) notes that U.S. society has harnessed a social tradition of upward mobility, guided by an ethos of control, centred upon the individual and free-market entrepreneurship. This has been described by scholars such as Louis Hartz (1955), as a colonial fragment that has deeply influenced the American political and social landscape.

There are a myriad of causal factors impacting the Left's lack of political traction in the United States. Louis Hartz (1955) identified the United States as a polity and culture tending towards Lockean thought. With this in mind, the American Left has often failed to cohesively articulate, particularly in the last four decades, a unifying narrative that could inspire the many disparate leftist groups to solidify into a cooperative, collective and unified voice (Cockburn, 2007; Davis, 1986). Throughout history the American Left has found itself in a marginalised position, often experiencing governmental repression through various agencies, ranging from law enforcement (and especially the Federal Bureau of Investigation) to the Internal

Revenue Service (IRS) (Goldstein, 1978; Lader, 1979; Smith, 1996). The Trade Union Movement, in comparison to other labour movements around the world, has been relatively impotent politically, particularly in the last five decades. The experience of the Cold War caused the U.S. Trade Union Movement to become co-opted into what C. Wright Mills (1956) describes as one of the myriad of existing components that constitute the power elite. This has driven the American Left, which has oftentimes found itself as a dispirited voice, into a 'political wilderness' (Kazin, 2011, pp. xi-xix).

One vehicle in which the American Left has been able to find expression and gain political traction in the last fifty years has been in providing a voice of dissent regarding U.S. foreign policy. This was most clearly evinced through opposition to the Vietnam War, opposition to Reagan's foreign policy towards Central America in the 1980s, and, in recent times, opposition to President George W. Bush's military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq (Cockburn, 2007; Smith, 1996; Schulzinger, 2006).

Renowned writers on the Left, such as Alexander Cockburn, have contended that despite the Left appearing fractured through the politics of difference, apparent when a constellation of single issue groups rally around their particular cause, a certain commonality draws such groups together in times of war. This has been exemplified through movements protesting United States foreign policy, and within this ferment there have been calls for more participatory democracy. Aligned to this dissent is an analysis of American foreign policy which is conceptualised as operating through the prism of the military-industrial complex (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). Examples of this can be found in demonstrations of resistance to U.S. involvement in wars such as World War I, the Korean War and notably the Vietnam War (Diggins, 1973). The American New Left that was to become a prominent vehicle for the student anti-war movement adopted strident direct action tactics, for example, the employment of mass demonstrations such as sit-ins and the burning of draft cards (Diggins, 1973; Lader, 1979).

Cockburn (2007) articulates an observable trend of de-escalation in the strength of collectivity in the American Left's responses to each successive war since Vietnam. In a journal article featured in the *New Left Review*, titled *Whatever Happened To The Anti-War Movement?*, Cockburn explores the question in his title, pointing out that "...compared to kindred movements in the 1960s and early 1970s or

to the struggles against Reagan's wars in Central America in the late 1980s, it is certainly inert" (Cockburn, 2007, p. 29).

Economic developments in approximately the last four decades have also hampered the ability of the Left to put forward a compelling agenda. As the United States progressed into the 1970s it became increasingly apparent that Keynesian-Welfare compromise was showing signs of deterioration and with it, ultimately, decay. The early 1970s saw the long post-war boom end in the United States as the oil shocks and other economic factors facilitated conditions that saw rising levels of high unemployment, stagflation and rising interest rates, as well as rising deficits in the nation's balance of payments (Abrahams, 2006; Davis, 1981; Ness, 2004). The potency of Keynesianism, which had proven to be an effective tool for the New Deal consensus, evaporated in the face of the economic recession of 1971 and 1974.<sup>4</sup>

The New Left in the 1960s provided a devastating critique against Democratic party-style Keynesianism and its accompanying Cold War consensus, which the New Left broadly termed Corporate Liberalism (Kazin, 1995, pp. 118-122). Prior to the tumult of the 1960s the United States had experienced a relatively high degree of social harmony and cultural and political consensus (Bone, 1977; Olson, 2000; Rising, 1997). Political, social and media elites seemed to camouflage social differences (Bone, 1977; Davis, 1981; Lader, 1979). Furthermore, they both agreed that Communism needed to be contained. Also, there was a consensus that the state had a role in playing an active part in the economy (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1974; Isserman and Kazin, 2000). The combined loss of economic potency as well as the perceived breakdown in social conformity, left a vacuum for a new voice which proposed a radical new direction (Baccioco, 1974; Isserman and Kazin, 2000).

. The New Right built upon the tumult of the 1960s and gradually discarded Keynesianism altogether (Brands, 2001; Brenner, 2004; Davis, 1981). The rise of trans-national economic Liberalism in the 1970s further hindered the American Left's efforts to counter the increasing potency of the New Right (Gaffaney, 1999; Newman, 2001).

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<sup>4</sup> Keynesianism can be best described as needing the following requirements: a relatively high degree of state capacity and national economic autonomy (particularly the existence of sufficient control over foreign trade and transnational capital flows in order to augment an increase in aggregate demand from generating a balance of payments crisis) (Roper, 2005, p. 31).



The New Right embraced economic doctrines calling for the free flow of world capital, the elimination of social welfare safety nets, privatisation, an increasing emphasis on minimal government, free trade and non-interference of the state in the private sector (Davis, 1981; Brenner, 2004; Neman, 2001). Moreover, further platforms advocating low fiscal deficits and an emphasis on cutting taxes whenever possible were also trumpeted as ways forward to jump-start economic prosperity (Gaffaney, 1999; Newman, 2001). This set of proposed policy assumptions espoused by the New Right was part of a Western-world trend which became popularly known as Neoliberal Globalism. As a project, globalism had an agenda that was political, economic and social. Reasons mooted for this development included increasing levels of technology and the associated rising pre-eminence of the knowledge economy (Klein, 2008; Steger, 2003). Globalism further undermined the American Left as it was touted as being an irreversible and inevitable trend. This inclination was also described in political and cultural discourse as representing a powerful narrative which stated that there was no other alternative (Gaffaney, 1999; Davis, 1981; Steger, 2003). Such rhetoric cast globalism as being inherently natural. Neoliberal Globalism furthermore, was something to be embraced, and promoted a futurism that provided neoliberal adherence with a sense of euphoria (McClelland and St John, 2005, p.178).

The successful rise to power of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom in 1979, and Ronald Reagan in the United States in 1981, gave further impetus to the Neoliberal Globalisation project. Its embrace of monetarist economic policies could almost be described as an individual marker of self-identification. Such a new world places great emphasis on the individual and his/her ability to navigate the uncertain waters of the free market (Newman, 2001, p.14). These processes helped atomise whole communities as the free flow of world capital was neither permanent nor secure. Individuals, by necessity, had to become more flexible in their working hours and working conditions (Steger, 2003; Sniegocki 2008). The increased demands of globalised capital often required longer hours at work, and less family time. Critics on the Left suggested such trends inevitably produced a growing sense of insecurity as capital was no longer domesticated, but internationalised. Individuals in this environment had to follow where the economic rewards manifested themselves because their occupations became increasingly transient, with large corporations

frequently merging, causing the loss of a localised presence in regional centres (Davis, 1981; Newman, 2001). Economic rationalisation and down-sizing became well known terms affecting the financial security of many people (Newman, 2001). Privatism was viewed as the only economic prescription for development. These sentiments, combined with historical developments, fuelled an even more intense push towards pure free market globalism (Newman, 2001, pp. 14-16).

The main question in this thesis to be explored is; has the rise of postmodernism and the New Social Movements essentially undermined and 'individuated' the traditionally collectivist American Left? It seeks to address the shift of degree, if any, of the American Left's character as a collective force of dissent regarding, primarily, U.S. foreign policy. The approach of this thesis has been to examine two indicative and comparative case studies, two left-leaning groups that emerged spontaneously in the 1980s and 2000s in one of the most conservative areas of the United States, with a view to determining the impact of postmodernism and the New Social Movements on the attitudes and behaviours of the group members. The way this has been explored, for the purposes of this thesis, has been to investigate through non-random interviews, based upon an open-ended questionnaire<sup>5</sup>, these activist groups protesting U.S. foreign policy. The case studies have been scrutinized in search of evidence pointing towards the degree of shift of members, *vis-à-vis* individual atomisation versus traditional socialist collectivism. The two case studies are the Coalition for Central America (CCA) and the Palouse Peace Coalition (PPC). The CCA protested Reagan's proxy war in Central America in the 1980s while the PPC protested the United States involvement in both Iraq and Afghanistan in 2001 through to 2009. The CCA and the PPC were two grassroots organisations local to the Moscow-Pullman area in North-West Idaho and Western-Washington respectively. Both Moscow and Pullman are proximate University towns in which the University of Idaho (UI) and Washington State University (WSU) are based. These two Universities, ten kilometres apart, are situated in a predominantly politically conservative area of the United States.

The relevance of the central question of this thesis to these two case studies is especially pertinent in respect of the possible atomization of American leftist activism *vis-à-vis* dissent regarding U.S. foreign policy. If American leftism, based

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<sup>5</sup> The questionnaire, approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (UoW) Research Ethics Committee, can be found in the Appendix.

increasingly on anti-war activism, has become atomised, it should, we can hypothesise, be most evident in politically conservative areas, where the ideological residue of previous<sup>6</sup> eras is virtually non-existent. In other words, the spontaneous emergence of Leftist activity in 'non-contaminated' areas would seem to represent a 'purer' form of contemporary ideology. Following such emergencies, then, one could expect that this more responsive, purer and spontaneous form of contemporary American leftism would spread to other locations that might be more endemically politically progressive in character. This, then, underscores the importance of the case studies as predictors of the wider presence of traditional Leftist concepts of solidarity and cooperation. This has further importance because a migration in away from fundamental notions of collective and universal values runs counter to what one might expect based on traditional conceptions of a Leftist ideology.

This study is in no way an exegesis of the historical development of socialist thought in the United States. Rather, it offers a comparative political approach, with extensive references to political philosophy, in which indicative case studies are used to address the fundamental question as outlined. The discussion looks at the distinguishing features of the New Left and New Social Movements, as trajectories of what may be termed a *new sensibility*, in which cultural issues and individual (personal) development have become the pivotal points of focus for the activism of the contemporary American Left (Kazin, 2011). This signals a departure from traditional social movements of the Left that placed a greater collective, economic, and materialist emphasis as the central motivations of activism. Consequently, an observable shift can be seen in the overall discourse of the American Left since the 1960s (Kazin, 2011, pp. 252-264). In its focus on cultural issues, Judith Butler (1998) notes in her *New Left Review* journal article, "Merely Cultural," that the contemporary American Left still resonates with a sense of cause, that being for *economic and social justice and equality*. Furthermore, what is observable through the trajectory of New Social Movements, through the focus on cultural issues and decentralised non-hierarchical political structures, is that it creates spaces for individuals to participate in such a way that allows personal expression of intrinsic values and beliefs unique to them, to the

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<sup>6</sup> That is, residue of collectivist Leftism still resident in the large, more liberal cities (e.g., San Francisco) from the 1930s.

individual. In this regard, there can also be seen dissolution of boundaries between the individual and the collective, in an activism that tends to be reflexive and personalised in style (Butler, 1998, pp.33-44). Such a suggestion of boundary dissolution is not to say the distinction between individualism and collectivism is in any way diminished. Rather, it is to point to the emerging view of a number of activists within the scope of the contemporary Left, who view themselves as distinct individuals, and act in accordance with 'individualistic' mores, while at the same time having the confidence to assert their activism within a moderately collectivist framework (Butler, 1998, pp.33-44).

Such assertions however appear in this research to be far from the traditional socialist principles that evince a clear dichotomy between individualism and collectivism. We will conclude that the apparent collapse of this dichotomy points to a non-universalistic and contingent set of beliefs, a 'post modernisation' of the contemporary Left (Miliband, 1994, pp.3-14).

Renowned British Marxist, the late Ralph Milliband (1994), in an article entitled "Plausibility of Socialism," expressed the common view that the [traditional] Left is universalistic by nature. Milliband (1994) regards addressing the concerns of economic materialism as being fundamental to the process of emancipation. Collectivism, he wrote, still plays a critical element in the Left's progressive vision both in a material sense and humanitarian manner of redress (pp.3-14).

The focus of this work, then, rather than following an orthodox Marxist approach (locating modern capitalism as a distinguishing feature within the realms of activist movements), examines the primary (in the 1980s, arguably the only) activity of American leftism, protesting against U.S. foreign policy. However, this thesis does discuss at length the projects of Neoliberalism and the New Right as being a set of multi-causal factors that have had a shaping effect on both American political and social discourse. This is addressed as this thesis discusses the contemporary American Left, which exists within an economic, socio-political context largely shaped by both Neoliberal policies and discourse for approximately three decades.

This paper should to be read, then, in a U.S. context in which the American Left, tepid in comparison to its counterparts in other Western countries, has found its main expression in dissent of U.S. foreign policy. Hence, while we elucidate contemporary American Leftist themes, and in a broad sense seek to understand them on an

individualist-collectivist paradigm, we are not examining global leftism. As a matter of course, many of the interviewees from the CCA and PPC touch on a variety of themes that range from contemporary American Leftist cultural responses, individualistic views of activism, to overtly postmodernist sensibilities through their responses relating to ideas of self-identity, and philosophical and spiritual views. In other words, some of the responses from members and former members of both the CCA and the PPC steer away from a universalistic and totalising world view. This is indisputably postmodern (Butler, 2002; Hutcheon, 2002).

The Vietnam War was to prove a lightning rod for the New Left in galvanising support against the war. The resistance to U.S. foreign policy in the 1960s also cultivated distaste for prevailing authority structures and fostered a quest for emancipation from societal structures perceived to be oppressive (Bacciocco, 1974; Boskin and Rosenstone 1980). A strong driving factor that provoked the ferment of the New Left was dissent against U.S. foreign policy functioning within the Cold War narrative (Lader, 1979; Rising, 1997). For example, the New Left viewed U.S. support, for third-world revolutionary movements as a struggle against imperialism (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979).

The American New Left splintered in 1969 and a cluster of single issue groups emerged (Bacciocco, 1974; Diggins, 1973; Lader, 1979). Springing out of the New Left, a plethora of New Social Movements (NSMs) materialised. These movements, like the New Left, challenged existing authority structures as well as generally promoting the ideals of a 'participatory democracy' (Johnston, Gusfield and Laraña, 1994). The diffusion of NSMs allowed the germination of a wide range of single issue groups (Johnston, Gusfield and Laraña, 1994; Kazin, 2011). These groups often defined their identity in terms of difference rather than commonality to other groups, as well as society at large. Johnston *et al.* (1994) note that these movements were reflexive in nature. The burgeoning of such groups also included peace movements that carried forth a continuing critique of U.S. foreign policy. For example the early 1980s saw the proliferation of the 'Nuclear Freeze Movement' throughout the United States. The 1980s also witnessed the largest anti-war protest since the Vietnam era as the Left galvanised to protest the Contra Wars in Central America (Cockburn, 2007; Smith, 1996). Many of the same themes were raised by these movements and were articulated by the New Left such as the 'military-industrial complex'. Moreover,

other critiques emerged relating to the excesses of executive power as well as a desire to influence the political system in a more direct democratic manner (Adam, 1993; Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin, 1990).

These organisations were characterised by a proclivity for non-hierarchical, egalitarian, decentralised organisational structures. They also tended towards localism and the establishment of a micro-culture within the prevailing cultures of the macro- and the meso-levels of the populace of the United States (Adam, 1993; Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin, 1990). Examples of localism can be found in the two case studies which were conducted in the Moscow-Pullman area. For example, the Coalition for Central America (CCA), which operated in Moscow Idaho, and Pullman Washington, drew participants from the local community who found personal resonance with the NSM organisational characteristics. This is important to the central question because NSM groups typically operate on a decentralised non-hierarchical basis, which encourages consensus building, contains within it a proclivity towards a personalism which and can steer a group away from collectivism towards individualism (Johnston *et al.*, 1994). A discussion of New Social Movements is of particular relevance to the original question posed in this thesis: the essential characteristics and mores of NSMs have profound implications for the evolving American Left, and the changing relevance of collectivism.

The American Left coalesced in the early Twenty-First Century, in 2001, around the U.S. foreign policy posture adopted following the September 11 airline hijacking attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. The Bush administration's foreign policy became known as the 'Bush Doctrine of Pre-emption' (Bacevich, 2011; Boot, 2002). This foreign policy posture and the shift from containment to pre-emption was one of the significant factors leading to the military action taken in Iraq at the beginning of 2003 (Bacevich, 2011). This sparked great ferment within the American Left and thus anti-war groups were prompted to protest the Bush Administration's actions. Protests were staged throughout the United States. Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington were to prove no exception. The Palouse Peace Coalition (PPC) was formed in 2001 to provide an activist voice in a geographic location that was politically conservative in character. Based upon the research, the PPC, in a comparative sense to the CCA, was arguably more decentralised and atomized in operation. The PPC operated in a structural mode

similar to the CCA, in which egalitarianism and consensus building was promoted. Moreover, it shared many similarities with contemporary NSMs.

### **Adams (2003): Political Ideology Today**

Ian Adams (2003), in two chapters in *Political Ideology Today* that deal with globalisation and postmodernism, broadly points to shifting conceptions in Western society of universal ideologies, fixed identities, as well as a host of other established doctrines in Western civilisation. Adams draws upon postmodern theory objectively to describe contemporary societal and political trends that may be considered seismic in their impact on both the personal and political. He notes that society, in becoming increasingly pluralistic, inclusively promotes once-marginalised identities in a diverse societal canopy that imposes universalistic beliefs, traditions, and essentialist ideologies commonly seen by many today as passé. Adams elucidates, in a broad sense, that in postmodernist currents, human identities are contingent and contain a dimension of multiplicity. He also contended that society has become de-traditionalised and no longer looks to the grand established ideologies of liberalism and socialism in an all-encompassing and universalistic manner. He points out that the era of mass parties catering to a broadly uniform and traditional electorate based generally on class lines has reached its culmination. This change towards a more *identitarian* group association form of political economy can be said to be fragmenting and decentering for many individuals. Adams notes that for many, class dimensions and contemporary politics are eschewed. In their place are divisions of social groups, identitarian in nature, that could be said to be based on a politics of difference, such as age, gender, locality, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, occupation, and so forth (p. 293). Adams suggests that theoreticians such as Jean-François Lyotard and Michel Foucault advocate a politics of egalitarianism and resistance. The form of this resistance is based on protest, neither pointing towards any social analysis nor a governing philosophy. It is argued that these philosophers advocate for a social movement of ferment, predisposed towards protesting traditional established structures. Arguably, it could be said that this fosters an activism of negation. Adams also articulates that postmodern tenets, however broad, have been criticised from many different quarters. For example, he points out that

It may be argued that it [postmodernism] is self-contradictory and self-defeating, in that it uses general forms of reasoning

that it says are no longer valid and claims truth and objectivity while at the same time claiming that truth and objectivity are impossible. (p. 293)

Adams argues that according to a postmodern sensibility, contemporary pluralistic societies posit that no individual's cultural perspective, traditions, or metanarrative should universally "triumph" over another person's experiences. Accordingly, individuals construct their own identities and ways of understanding the world, which can be argued to be contingent, because they are based on circumstances. Following this dimension of thought, the imposition of values may have a cultural bias and can therefore become problematic in a society that has a myriad of constructed and ever-changing meanings.

Adams suggests that postmodernism, rather than replacing modernity, is itself "...as much as an acceleration of modernity as its demise" (p. 294). He arrives at this point of conjecture in observing the major social and economic currents that are fashioning the contemporary world, are the ideals of modernity itself. For example, the increasing importance of new technology and markets are an extension of the modernist project. From reading Adams' analysis, one could contend that he may subscribe to Jürgen Habermas' conceptualisation of late capitalism, or British sociologist Anthony Giddens' theoretical school of late modernism. Nevertheless, the trends, and more importantly the mood that postmodern theory provides in an adjective label do align to the contemporary experience. This is a point Adams asserts. By and large, postmodernism resonates because thematically, concepts of contingency, self-construction, and fragmentation, are observable in an individual's contemporary experience. Adams suggests that in a fast-paced and changeable world, it is not hard to observe that traditional institutions and structures are destabilising. Adams suggests that the nature of this destabilisation can leave individuals with a feeling of uncertainty and disorientation. Pluralism in this contemporary context challenges existing mores and preconceptions. The intensification of Neoliberal globalism, the ever-increasing functions and flows of high technology, and expanding markets, have led to an acceleration of consumerism. This phenomenon is coupled with what Adams contends as the continual need for self-redefinition. This proclivity is viewed as seismic; economic and social changes have left individuals searching for platforms in which they can express their



individuality. Adams proposes that the politics of postmodernism are in fact the politics of identity (p. 294).

Adams observes that while the grand old ideologies of Socialism and Liberalism, in an essentialist manner, have declined, liberalism, he argues, could be said to be preeminent: "While some versions of it may be in decline, liberal ideas and values show no sign of disappearing. Indeed... there is a case for arguing that liberalism is triumphant and the only serious ideology left" (p. 295).

**Ellen Meiksins-Wood: (1995) "What is the 'Postmodern' agenda? An Introduction" (*Monthly Review*, 47[3])**

Meiksins-Wood outlines a conceptual framework of what broadly construes postmodern theory. In this article, theoreticians such as Foucault, Lyotard and Habermas are discussed. Meiksins-Wood remarks that American sociologist C. Wright Mills commented as early as the mid-1950s that Western society was on the threshold of approaching the postmodern age. Meiksins-Wood paints a scenario with broad brush strokes describing the Enlightenment period. This epoch was described as *progress* being viewed as having endless possibilities. Furthermore, human achievement looked as if it had entered a period of unstoppable progress. Meiksins-Wood details that the grand ideologies of Liberalism and Socialism which have shaped the Western world originated from the thought of Enlightenment.

Meiksins-Wood points out that in broad terms postmodernism treated as an amalgam of thought has enunciated a critique of grand narratives, distinctively that of Lyotard and Foucault. These postmodern theorists have called into question universalistic constructs of historical progress and their ensuing emancipatory visions are imposing. Meiksins-Wood contends that a postmodern sensibility points the way for individuals to view their identity as negotiated and contingent in nature. She further elucidates that postmodernism as a voluminous construct possesses a relativistic tenor. It is espoused that one of relativism's purposes serves as an agent for continual construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of the self. This proclivity may have profound implications for today's contemporary Left. The postmodern mood of relativism, fragmentation, and the questioning of totalising essentialist doctrines, as a consequence, may lead to a loss of faith and progress. The belief in progress in historical materialism is essential to the tenets of an orthodox Leftist project. The consequence is a widespread diffusion of what noted

Leftist intellectuals such as Ralph Miliband describes as 'epistemic conservatism' (Miliband, 1994, p.5).

**L.A. Kauffman : “Small change: Radical politics since the 1960s” in *Cultural politics and social movements***

Micro politics is concerned with single issue politics. Since the post-war period, it has become a consequence of economic, social and political changes in the 1970s and 1980s. Kauffman (1995) observes that it is politics “that valorizes the small” (p. 155).

In present day United States, a myriad of small interest groups that cover a wide spectrum of single issue causes are not only politically motivated but can also be categorised as networks catering towards ardent hobbyists. The existence of these groups has played a consequential part in public discourse. Such groups have always been in existence. However, contemporary groups, especially large organised advocacy groups, have become institutionalised in the American political system. This has occurred through the creation of Political Action Committees (PACS), which have had the consequence of institutionalising single issue causes in the prevailing political discourse. The spontaneity of grassroots organisations still exists, but even the heralded Obama campaign's focus on inspiring a grassroots movement was given support by existing large-scale advocacy groups such as “Move On.”

The contemporary public sphere has featured a wide diffusion of news coverage, opinion pieces, “advertorials” and conspiracy theories. The explosion of 'new media' technologies such as *Facebook*, *YouTube* and text messaging featured heavily in the 2008 federal election (Sperry, 2007). Obama's campaign was far superior in using 'the new media' to either of his main rivals. He was able to raise record amounts of campaign contributions, and as early as the second quarter of 2007 Obama was able to raise USD\$32.5 million, thereby far out-eclipsing his Democratic rivals. This was accomplished despite the fact that Obama ran as a relative unknown (Morain, 2007). Senator Hilary Clinton, the Democratic Party's frontrunner, not only had superior name recognition but at that time enjoyed a comfortable lead in the polls.

Butler states that postmodernism questions philosophy's reliability. This casts a shroud of scepticism on embedded narratives (Butler, 2002, p. 110). As once

accepted truths become questionable, accepted societal narratives begin to lose their reliability and confidence (Butler, 2002, p. 110).

The element of cynicism that is suggested in this interpretation introduces a myriad of complexities. Media political discourse does not evade such a critique. Consequently this has ramifications for the political culture of the United States primarily because it denotes a loss of trust in the United States' liberal democratic culture and its institutions (Butler, 2002; Kauffman, 1995; Sperry, 2007).

For many, the media has been subsumed by heightened corporate interests that would rather focus on the sensational than on 'hard news.' Images have become a source of manipulation and an on-going quest for higher ratings. Perhaps this is because the American mass media market has become highly congested, especially through the medium of television and the 'new media.' Such beliefs cause a loss of confidence, leaving many Americans who hold a questionable view of the integrity of the media to wonder what is real, and what is simply dramatised. Significant events in the last two decades, such as the first Gulf War and the second Gulf War, led many to believe that news coverage has been sensationalised. The first Gulf War of 1991 was the first war to be televised live. All major media network coverage of the war featured high tech weaponry, such as Tomahawk cruise missiles flying past set camera positions on their way to surgically remove their targets. Terms such as *collateral damage*, *surgical strike* and the second Gulf War's campaign of 'shock and awe,' penetrated the American consciousness (Butler, 2002, p.110).

Media imagery, according to many sceptics, also pertains to other spheres, not just to dramatic events such as war. It also features in a sceptical discourse around the manipulation of more obviously political imagery and rhetoric. Postmodern scepticism of the unreal image and its potential manipulation has also brought about further criticism. Butler (2002) comments that "The problem is that this attack on truthful realism – ever since, indeed, the moderns turned against that of the 19th century – has by now gone on so long that for many a distrust of the fictional has indeed driven out a confidence in the true" (p. 111). Butler's comments relate to the contemporary American Left because postmodern politics as previously outlined projects a mode and a discourse that eviscerates essentialist grand narratives. What one is left with is a vague articulation of economic justice, equality and collectivism. If truth in today's contemporary society is indeed relative and ideology is simply

collapsed into relativism then the Leftist cause, which is centred on universalistic doctrines of solidarity, cooperation and economic materialism, is rendered as ahistorical and contingent. The postmodern mood creates space for personalism and expressionalism. This is problematic for the Left as it has traditionally been centred on the collective plight of humanity, and has offered an emancipatory vision that is brought about through collective means. Classical socialism relies on the belief that history has a progressive and optimistic character that is continuing to unfold. There is scepticism *vis-à-vis* socialist tenets because they are seen intuitively as counterposed to the fundamentals of postmodernism.

## **Research Methodology**

The hypothesis was explored through two case studies which were examined in part in 20 interviews conducted primarily in Moscow Idaho, and Pullman Washington, while I was based at the University of Idaho, Moscow, on a field research trip from May to August, 2009.<sup>7</sup> The interviews used for this research were designed to evaluate participants of the two activists groups selected, the Coalition for Central America, and the Palouse Peace Coalition. The research design was formulated to evaluate participants' responses in the following areas: motivation, conceptions of social change, belief in an essential vision, personal views relating to collectivism, and the presence and strength of individualism. The design of the research questions was submitted to the University of Waikato Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee in April 2009. Approval for the research design was given in May 2009.

Out of the 20 respondents who participated in the approved interviews, the proportion relating to the CCA and PPC were as follows: eight CCA interviewees, and twelve PPC interviewees. The CCA, as previously mentioned, was an organisation that existed from 1986-1997. It was often difficult to locate CCA participants because many of them had moved on from the Moscow-Pullman area. In comparison, it proved to be an easier task to interview PPC participants. The PPC was at the time a functional social movement and was therefore easier to access for these interviews. The interviews were conducted with participants face-to-face. Most

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<sup>7</sup> An additional interview with participants in the Coalition for Central America were conducted later in New Zealand.

of the interviews took place in Moscow Idaho, close to the University of Idaho. Each interview was digitally recorded. Consent forms were signed by each participant, granting permission to be interviewed and for the responses to be transcribed. The interviews were transcribed between April 2010 and July 2010. The data gathered from the transcripts was coded into the following categories: motivation towards action, individualistic responses, collective responses, conceptions of the agency of social change, views on group participation, group organisation, universalistic beliefs/ideologies and individual-collective locus of control. The questions were designed using the following theoretical constructs: post-materialism, as outlined by Ronald Inglehart (1997), contemporary political ideologies, as outlined by Ian Adams (2003), postmodernism, as laid out by Hutcheon (2002); Butler (2002); Meiksins-Wood (1995) and Kauffman (1995). The theory and characteristics of New Social Movements are articulated by Dalton *et al.* (1990), and Johnston, *et al.* (1994). The participant responses in the case study interviews were coded and compiled. Additionally, an historical overview was compiled through information gathered from influential group leaders in both the Coalition of Central America and the Palouse Peace Coalition. An archive of CCA documents was made available by the University of Idaho Library.

## **Synopsis of the Chapters**

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of some of the key tenets of classical socialism. This outline points to a belief system, theoretical framework and culture that emphasises collectivity, equality and a critique of capitalism. It the American Left and in particular the New Left of the 1960s. It outlines the cultural and sense of alienation the New Left felt during this period. One of the key motivating factors of the New Left was its critique of the Cold War consensus and the war in Vietnam. These two factors contributed to the anger and resentment that the New Left had regarding prevailing elites and institutions. The New Left had many avenues of expression that facilitated their activism. This chapter outlines one of the key intellectual figures, Herbert Marcuse, who stimulated much of the revolutionary ardour of the New Left, and remained highly influential from the escalation of the Vietnam War until the New Left's collapse by 1969.

Chapter Two covers two aspects that have influenced the contemporary characteristics of the American Left. The first part of the chapter gives an overview of the New Social Movements (NSMs). The NSMs have been defined as single-issue groups that emerged out of the New Left. Like the New Left, they have resonated with themes of egalitarianism, consensus-building and a desire to transform America culturally at a decentralised and local level. The second part of this chapter summarises the project of Neoliberalism, which has acted as a counterweight, effectively restraining the potency of American leftist discourse. This paper argues that the Neoliberal project has deepened Neoliberalism in the United States due to the emphases that Neoliberalism places on individualism. Furthermore, Neoliberalism has hindered the American Left in that Neoliberalism has had a fragmenting effect on American communities, as well as individuals' sense of belonging to community. This chapter also addresses postmodern theory, which, I argue, has contributed to individuals' feelings of fragmentation and de-centeredness. This also has implications for the American Left, because postmodernism, in a broad sense, denounces essentialist narratives that socialism has traditionally provided. Furthermore, and especially significant for this study, it can be argued that postmodernism further atomises individuals, leading them to migrate away from cohesive forms of collectivism. The concluding segment of the chapter outlines President Reagan's foreign policy towards Central America. This is addressed by way of introducing the anti-war movement that protested against Reagan's proxy wars in Central America.

Chapter Three introduces the first of the two case studies – The Coalition for Central America (CCA). This chapter outlines the history of the CCA, its structure and its organisational culture. A case study is dissected and analysed revealing possible implications for further movements of the American Left.

The final chapter discusses the Palouse Peace Coalition (PPC), which in some ways acted similarly to its forbear, the CCA, protesting United States foreign policy. This chapter examines the PPC, the ways in which it differed from the CCA, and may even have presaged fundamental changes in the character of the American Left. This section discusses the analysis of the PPC activists' conceptions of what constitutes an agent of social change, as well as contemporary views of social movements and collectivism.



# Chapter One: The American Left: A Voice in The Wilderness

## Socialism: An Overview

Socialism can be seen broadly as a culture, within which exists a set of institutional frameworks located in a particular historical epoch (Therborn, 1992, pp.17-32). Therborn (1992) has observed that socialism provides its adherents with three essential points of reference: “an identity, a world-view (a particular cognitive competence), and a set of values and norms” (pp. 17-32). From a socialist perspective, these values and norms are shaped by one’s class position, namely in subordination to the capitalist mode of production (Miliband, 1994; Singer, 1980). This prepares the ground for the potential processes of ‘conscientisation’ to take place, in which the ‘oppressed’ or ‘working class’ become aware of their position within the structures of the capitalist system (Adams, 2003; Althaus-Reid, 2000; Freire, 2006). During this process they become aware of their commonality and thus a collective consciousness may be formed (Althaus-Reid, 2000; Freire, 2006). Additionally, this points towards concerns surrounding the distribution of material resources within society. Socialism’s classical tenets, as outlined by Marx offer a remedial framework that addresses the contradictory nature of capitalism in a historical dialectic (Adams, 2003; Miéville, 2005; Singer, 1980). It concludes that capitalism is unsustainable due to irreconcilable contradictions. Following this historical dialect, a new mode of production will arise which is conceptualised as promoting the fulfilment of the economic needs of the majority (Adams, 2005; Singer, 1980). Following this conceptualisation, the majority, in having their material needs fulfilled moved towards a more cooperative, democratic and just society (Alway, 1995; Miliband, 1994; Therborn, 1992). Once freed from alienation humankind is better positioned to fulfil its principle vocation of becoming more human (Alway, 1995; Miliband, 2004). Socialism’s theoretical framework has provided it with an intellectual culture that has provided a tradition which many intellectuals have sought to elaborate and revise. Such intellectuals of note include Antonio Gramsci, Rosa Luxemburg, Ralph Miliband, Leon Trotsky, and Perry Anderson (Adams, 2003; Bottomore, 2002; Lerner, 1982).

Socialism has existed both implicitly and explicitly on normative values that seek to foster cooperation, fraternity and a sense of belonging to a project which has



traditionally proclaimed an emancipatory vision (Adams, 2003; Alway, 1995; Miliband, 1994). This has fostered a sense of cohesion and collectivism in which members have highlighted their commonality under objective economic conditions of inequality and disenfranchisement (Adams, 2003; Milliband, 1994; Therborn, 1992). Socialist adherents have possessed a schema nourished in a variety of ways. Socialist thought has been nurtured through a strong identification with humanity; especially the exploited and the oppressed (Gregor, 2009; Singer, 1980). This is expressed through Labour and revolutionary movements, and at its core a theoretical framework that possesses an economic historical and social analysis through the writings of Karl Marx. Marx's ideas have influenced a broad range of disciplines, such as Economics, History and Sociology to name but a few (Adams, 2003; Alway, 1995; Miliband, 1994).

In general terms, socialism is a culture of identity, primarily in terms of class – the working class. But it has also sustained itself in a number of other ways, such as: identification with the people, the oppressed, the labour movement, the Revolution, and – at the centre of the socialist tradition – by reference to the pantheon of Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Bernstein, Luxemburg and other intellectuals, in a socialist and intellectual cannon of writings and concepts (Therborn, 1992, p.17-32).

It could be argued that socialist, and in particular, Marxist theory has illuminated several pivotal tenets, that provide both a comprehensive understanding coupled with an in-depth philosophical political analysis, viewed as giving Socialism its intellectual force (Singer, 1980; Therborn, 1992). Göran Therborn (1992) observes that socialism's core values involve a sense of shared experience, "The core of socialist values might be said to consist of equality and solidarity, which may be given either an individualist or a collectivist inflection" (Therborn, 1992, p.18).

The socialist vision requires a sense of solidarity and collectivism, a unity of purpose and a belief in historical materialism, and an understanding of community and cooperation (Birnbaum, 2001; Gregor, 2005; Miliband, 1994). It seems self-evident that American society has undergone a 'sea change' from higher rates of civic engagement to a more individualised paradigmatic shift in personal values (Inglehart, 1997; Putman, 2000). This development shares some elements of commonality with Ronald Inglehart's (1997) concept of post-materialism, which is discussed throughout this thesis. Post-materialism highlights what Inglehart (1997)

refers to as “a quiet revolution” within an individual’s value set (p.-2-21). . This value set steers away from materialistic goals of economic security, towards more individualistic goals of self-fulfilment, satisfaction, and arguably self-actualisation the concentrated growth of information technology and the emphasis on free-trade has facilitated a hyper-competitive and ‘flexible’ marketplace (Inglehart, 1997, p.7-38). Many on the Left will argue that this is symptomatic, of what is termed post-industrialism, which provides a powerful construct on the changing nature of the regulatory mode of capitalism (Rustin, 1989, p.54-77). Such a view highlights clearly evident trends of increased transnational capital flows and the intensification of information technology (Rustin, 1989, p.54-77). According to post-industrial thought, socialist perspective of economic materialism, the structures of a post-industrialist society, it can be argued by their very nature, promote and encourage the process of deepening of individualism. This stems from a range of multi-causal factors, not least of which involves the adoption of neo-liberal globalist tenets. The structural realities of these tenets affect an individual’s experience of personal and working life. Furthermore, they also contribute to the widespread adoption that promotes the individual as an autonomous economic unit in a competitive environment to gain or sustain occupational and socio-economic status (Halman, 1996, p.195). Additionally, ‘flexible’ labour markets create a sense of insecurity amongst the workforce which structurally facilitates normative behaviour and a value set that is fashioned in the image of neo-liberal globalism. Couched in this ideation is a discourse that co-opts the Protestant work ethic, to suggest that the competitive struggle can lead one to higher levitations of social mobility.

### **The New Left: The Voice of Dissent**

The New Left deeply influenced both Western Europe and parts of Eastern Europe, Japan and the United States (U.S.) (Lerner, 1982; Little, 1998; Lynd, 1980; Scruton, 1985). It arose from an international political movement of the 1960s, which had its reverberations in the 1970s and into the 1980s through its successor, the New Social Movements (NSMs) (Adam, 1993; Kazin, 2011). Some global examples of the New Left movements include the Prague Spring in 1968, a polycentric reformist movement, which sought to refashion Communism in

Czechoslovakia<sup>8</sup> (Lerner, 1982; Little, 1998; Lynd, 1980; Scruton, 1985). A second example was the New Left movement in 1968 in France. Revolutionary student groups in France, including the Situationist International and the *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, were inspired by Left Libertarian ideas relating to cultural production (Lerner, 1982; Little, 1998; Lynd, 1980; Scruton, 1985). University students throughout the United Kingdom were attracted to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's call for social reforms<sup>9</sup> (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979). In the United States, the New Left was primarily led by white middle class university students.

The New Left in the United States was centred around groups such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)<sup>10</sup> (Lader, 1979; O'Neil, 2001). SDS initially campaigned in the Civil Rights movement, but found its greatest expression in protesting against the United States involvement in the Vietnam War. As the 1960s progressed, SDS became increasingly radicalised in its critique of U.S. foreign policies and what it viewed as its underlying supporting structures as articulated by Mills' (1956) work, *The Power Elite*. Furthermore, U.S. foreign policy was perceived as blunting individual freedom, fostering a sense of disempowerment, which helped create a spiralling activist ferment by New Left radicals (Marcuse 1964). Part of this growing ferment surrounded Herbert Marcuse's influential writings that questioned existing socio-political norms which encouraged resistance towards authority structures (Marcuse, 1964, p.10-44). The New Left's interpretation of Herbert Marcuse's teachings inspired a scathing critique of the Cold War consensus<sup>11</sup> and the legitimacy of U.S. institutional structures, viewed as upholding this consensus (Kellner and Marcuse, 2005; Lader, 1979; Walter, 1992). SDS was one of the leading proponents of what came to be known as the politics of existentialism (Rossinow, 1998, p.5). In short, for SDS the political became personal (Rossinow, 1998, p.5). The arrival of SDS also signalled a departure from established social norms that surrounded various cultural mores such as monogamy, and uniformity surrounding values of the Protestant work ethic (Bone, 1977; Feenberg, 1986). O'Neil (2001) summarises the New Left and countercultural

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<sup>8</sup> The aim of the movement was to steer Czech Communism, which had long been under Soviet hegemony, into a refurbished version. The main drive for the change of Czech Communism was to refine the current Communist movement into a more attuned version, which would allow for a greater tolerance of self-expression, and hence would be less authoritarian (Gross, 1986; Lynd, 1980; Scruton, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> In the United Kingdom, the New Left was championed for the campaign for nuclear disarmament. In many circles, the British New Left was known as the new reasoners (Arnold, 1962).

<sup>10</sup> Klatch (1995) notes that: "At its peak, from around 1967 to 1969, SDS membership is estimated to have been as high as a hundred thousand" (p. 74).

<sup>11</sup> Brand (1990) observes that the activism of the 1960s undercut the post-war consensus which had suggested the 'end of ideology', based on advancing economic growth and industrial modernization.

discourse of the 1960s as encapsulating an anti-authoritarian discourse: “American culture underwent a remarkable change in the 1960s, away from respect for authority, traditional values and the family, and toward individualism, freedom from responsibility, and the pleasure principle<sup>12</sup> (O’Neil, 2001, p. 77).

Many of the themes espoused by the New Left, such as its anti-establishment impulse, self expressivism, its desire for a more egalitarian style of governance and its distrust of centralisation, were dominant themes that filtered through to the flourishing of the New Social Movements (NSMs) in the early 1970s (Dalton et al., 1990). It was viewed by the New Left that the price of conformity and domination by such pervasive power structures was stifling individual freedoms (Habermas, 1971, p. 83). It was argued that individuals could find emancipation<sup>13</sup> through exercising resistance through social activism and by challenging the societal consensus which had spawned and maintained such structures (Alway, 1995; Bone, 1977; Marcuse, 1964). Additionally, the role the United States played in geo-politics was questioned. SDS claimed that the United States acted in an imperialist manner which contravened values of democratic participation, equality and social justice (Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Lader, 1979). As the 1960s progressed, the New Left became increasingly supportive of third world revolutionary movements such as the Cuban, Angolan and Chinese Revolutions (Ladern, 1979, p.213-14).

. Walter (1992) summarises the New Left’s disposition towards U.S. institutions:

... the free enterprise system, being intrinsically immoral, leads ineluctably to the setting of gravely unjust domestic and foreign policies. This defect mars American society, as it mars all capitalist societies. As a consequence, radical changes in U.S. institutions, public policy, and social attitudes were necessary. (p. 9)

In a generic sense, these currents held that modern industrialised societies had fallen short of practising inclusive democratic participation. This was to become an essential part of the New Left’s critique as they called for a greater role in

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<sup>12</sup> In the view of conservative observers – or those who had become conservative vis-à-vis the new confrontation – a ‘crisis of governability’ was threatening Western democracies (Brand, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> Professor Russell Jacoby, a New Left critic, questioned the quest for autonomy by New Left activists. “The private individual free to pick and choose was a joke from the beginning; not only the allotments were already picked and chosen, but the contents of the choice followed the dictates of the social not individual world. The private interest is already a particular social interest and it is only within the given social conditions and given social means that it can be pursued. It is the interest of the private individual, but its contents, like the form and means of development, are determined by independent social conditions” (Jacoby, 1973, p. 57).

decision-making that affected their own lives (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977; Kazin, 2011). Such a critique became especially pertinent with the introduction of the draft when the Vietnam War escalated in 1965. For many New Left activists, their lives were literally in a state of tumult as they faced the prospect of fighting a war in a far-off, distant outpost (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977). SDS's manifesto, *The Port Huron Statement* (1962), believed that the propagation of Cold War ideology and the economic reliance of the military industrial complex inevitably led to an oppressive conformity that was seen to allow social injustice to go unchallenged (Baccioco, 1974; Gross, 1986; Lader, 1979).

### **The New Left's Heritage: The American Old Left**

The American Old Left viewed Soviet style socialism as the world leader of the international socialist movement. Rising (1997) is unambiguous as to the influences that shaped the Old Left:

The Old Left, despite its divisions, shared a general political view very different from that of the New Left. Historically, the Old Left was decisively shaped by the Bolshevik Revolution, the Great Depression, antifascism, and World War II. Old Left groups also tended to be orientated toward the Soviet Union – perceiving it as a socialist model. (p. 21)

Throughout its history in the United States, socialism had been a much maligned movement and the subject of state suppression made it a marginalised entity in American politics. Contending with a deeply entrenched *laissez-faire* liberal tradition, socialism aroused great fear in popular American public discourse. Consequently, having to confront free market hegemony, socialist political parties rarely experienced political victory. Moreover, such rare events were restricted to local level municipal elections (Lens, 1969; Lerner, 1982). The halcyon days of American socialism occurred generally from 1912 to the arrival of Roosevelt's *New Deal* in the early 1930s (Lerner, 1982). Before the outbreak of the hostilities of World War I, the American Socialist party enjoyed a membership of approximately 800,000. However, in the preceding years, its membership experienced a notable decline (Lerner, 1982).

Spurred on by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and growing anti-war protests in the U.S., the American Communist Party sought to gain a foothold in the

unwelcoming American political landscape (Lerner, 1982). However, the fledgling Communist Party would find coordination and cohesion difficult as overt pressure from Moscow, such as Lenin's Twenty-One Points, had a destabilising effect on its momentum (Lerner, 1982). Rumours emanated from the Soviet Union that surrounded the brutality and totalitarianism of the Stalinist regime. These reverberations helped to create divisions among the ranks of the American Communist Party (Lerner, 1982). Consequently, many members left in protest, drawing the public's attention to the party's factional infighting. Despite the onset of the Great Depression (1929), the Communist Party presidential candidate, William Z. Foster, experienced a very poor showing in the 1932 presidential election. Nevertheless, the prevailing economic conditions, which afflicted the working class with impoverishment and despair, helped the Communist Party to gain a foothold in some trade unions, such as the congress of Industrial Workers (Lens, 1969; Lerner, 1982).

Franklin D. Roosevelt, following his victory in the 1932 presidential election, introduced a raft of measures through the *New Deal* that addressed the plight of the working class (Lens, 1969; Lerner, 1982). Furthermore, the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933 encouraged trade union organising efforts. These two measures from the Federal government helped to cool any growing sense of revolutionary ardour felt by the American working class (Lerner, 1982). Lens (1969) believed the growing sense of socialist radicalism was one of the factors that contributed to the passage of the New Deal. The fear of revolution that pervaded the Roosevelt Administration, historian Sidney Lens argued, was underlined as a key factor that underscored the politics of that time. Moreover, Federal efforts to address the plight of the working class transformed the United States from a society that allowed unfettered capitalism towards one that supported a moderate welfare state (Lens, 1969). The Federal government's ability to address workers' collective concerns effectively co-opted them into the political mainstream. Despite such developments, Lerner (1982) noted that the American Communist Party, for a time, was the pre-eminent socialist organisation. Possessing a strongly collectivist orientation, the American Communist Party sought to promote a strong sense of class identity. However, the 1950s saw the fortunes of the American Communist

Party freefall. Government restrictions combined with McCarthyism and the Cold War provided a hostile environment (Lens, 1969; Lerner, 1982).

Communism in the 1950s became linked with subversion in the political and popular minds of the American public (Lader, 1979). The House Committee on Un-American Activities served as a Cold War manifestation as the Federal government sought to expose and curtail Communist activities in the U.S. Furthermore, the Federal government with the passage of the Communist Control Act in 1954 effectively outlawed the Communist Party in the U.S. (Lader, 1979). Events such as the Soviet Union's 1956 invasion of Hungary and Nikita Khrushchev's Secret Speech at the 20th Party congress denouncing Stalin had a calamitous effect on the U.S. Communist Party (Bacciocco, 1974; Lerner, 1982). This effect was heightened as the majority of its membership was Stalinist in orientation (Lerner, 1982). An example of the fallout from the events of 1956 was the almost immediate dissolution of the Communist Party's youth group, the Labour Youth League (LYL) (Jacobs and Landau, 1966). American Marxism in the 1950s stood on the edge of oblivion as internal bickering and disillusionment drove many to look for an alternative.

Many Leftist intellectuals looked towards the United Kingdom for inspiration. C. Wright Mills, in an open letter to the *New Left Review*, published in the United Kingdom, famously called upon the creation of a New Left to part from the old fractious ideological struggles of Marxism (Bacciocco, 1974; Jacobs and Landau, 1966). Furthermore, Mills critiqued Cold War liberalism's uncritical view of its own prevailing ideology. Mills was unsparing in his criticism of both ideologies. At that time, Cold War liberalism believed it had put an end to ideology. This was due to many factors. Among the most commented on at that time was the success of the Keynesian mixed economy prescription in comparison to the perceived weakness of Soviet style economic centralised planning (Mills, 1956).

Mills states, in the *New Left review*, "... it takes from its opponent something of its inner quality" [Mills addressing the Soviet's attitude to Western democracies] (Mills, 1960, para. 19). "What does it all mean? That these people have become aware of the uselessness of Vulgar Marxism, but not yet aware of the uselessness of the liberal rhetoric" (para. 19). This movement was in part a response to the crisis of Leftist radicalism from the events of 1956 (Jacobs and Landau, 1966).

The New Left of the United Kingdom sought to emphasise more humanistic cultural issues rather than the perceived rigidity of class oriented revolutionary politics. The British New Left still held to collectivist objectives (Bacciocco, 1974). However, it was soon to become apparent, as exemplified by the growth of the U.S. New Left, that discontent to the prevailing Cold War consensus narrative provided an ideal vehicle for new expressions of individualism, and that these would easily supplant the collectivism of the 'Old Left' (Bacciocco, 1974).

By the late 1950s, the condition of the American Communist Party was considered to be terminal. Government suppression combined with internal disillusionment led to the trade union movement being co-opted into 'The Establishment' (Jacobs and Landau, 1966). Moreover, the socialist movement was also viewed as being co-opted into the Progressive Wing of the Democratic Party (Jacobs and Landau, 1966). Out of the disillusionment, a new movement would emerge. This new movement would redefine traditional socialist concepts of collectivism. The New Left would become a youth-driven movement shaped by a desire to embrace personal autonomy as well as offering a prescient critique of what was viewed as the 'elite status' given to U.S. militarism. The new agents of social change were to become white middle-class university students, anti-Vietnam War movement activists and members of the civil rights movement. Moreover as the 1960s progressed nearing its completion, the New Left became increasingly fragmented as the Vietnam War continued to be waged. The ongoing nature of the Vietnam War swept away the earlier optimism of the New Left, as articulated in the *Port Huron Statement* in 1962. Many protestors were fuelled by anger and fear in their activism against the Vietnam War. The war had left an indelible mark on an entire generation of activists. The tumult of the war, coupled with an overarching disillusionment towards U.S. institutions, enveloped the New Left. The New Left's critique became broader in its criticism and became increasingly targeted towards the very nature of U.S. society itself. Previous critiques have blamed U.S. institutions and power elites as reproducing values that were transmitted to what was viewed as an unsuspecting and conformist public. However, by the end of the 1960s the New Left's anger was not only directed at authority structures thought to be propagating the Vietnam War, but it seemed that the New Left perceived U.S. society as a whole as being a willing accomplice (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979). As the



New Left fragmented in 1969, new groups emerged, concentrating on single identity issues in the quest for recognition and greater societal tolerance and awareness. Such groups included: the Environmental, Latino and Feminist Movements, as well as the Gay and Lesbian, and Disabled Rights Movements amongst a plethora of other single-issue movements that were to become known as the New Social Movements (NSMs). The NSMs captured a *zeitgeist*; this impulse is about the politics of difference and a greater demand for citizens to control their own destinies. If one could state a single motivation that encapsulates this *zeitgeist* it would perhaps be the search to define and redefine identity (Johnston et al., 1994).

### **Social Democratic Roots of the New Left: SDS and the League for Industrial Democracy**

The SDS directly descended from a social democratic organisation, the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). The LID was established in 1905 by Upton Sinclair and Jack London (Bacciocco, 1974). The LID was committed to socialist values of solidarity and believed in bringing about the evolution of socialism in a gradualist manner. Committed to working within the American political system, the LID was strongly committed to opposing any manifestation of totalitarianism, therefore rendering it strongly anti-Communist (Bacciocco, 1974). The LID was affiliated with and strongly influenced by the American Socialist Party (Bacciocco, 1974). Notable Socialist Party leaders who were particularly influential included Michael Harrington and Norman Thomas (Lerner, 1982). Both the Socialist Party and its surrogate, the LID, were unwavering in their opposition to Communism. (Bacciocco, 1974; George and Wilcox, 1992; Lieberman, 2004).

University of Michigan students, notably future SDS leader Al Haber, formed the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID) in 1960 (Bone, 1977; George and Wilcox, 1992). The SLID was oriented towards direct-action tactics when deemed necessary. Its political agenda included a focus on education and a renewal of American democracy. The statement called for greater political participation in the United States political institutions. This was termed in the *Port Huron Statement* as 'participatory democracy.' By arguing what was wrong with the system, the *Port Huron Statement* presented a case although it fell short on specifics on how individuals could possess a greater say and how increased autonomy could affect

the quality of their individual lives. It was perceived that bureaucracy and the 'military-industrial complex' were viewed as a primary hurdle that the state presented in checking individual freedom (Bone, 1977; George and Wilcox, 1992; Rising, 1997). The SDS was officially formed out of the SLID in 1962. Its manifesto, *The Port Huron Statement*, outlined its political ambitions as being an 'Agenda for a Generation' (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). The SDS sought to be an all-inclusive organisation, which shied away from bureaucratic styled centralisation. In contrast, the New Left's historical consciousness was shaped by post-war economic boom, consumer abundance, mass consumer culture, suburban expansion, and a sense of affluence and expanding possibilities. For these radicals, corporate liberalism that continued to promote and expand the Cold War consensus – rather than fascism – constituted the main enemy (Rising, 1997, p. 21). A notable feature of early New Leftists was their proclivity to not act in an established socialist manner. If anything, the New Left drew upon traditional concepts of American democracy combined with a New Leftist brand of direct democracy which sought greater individual empowerment as well as a vision of a more humanistic society (Rising, 1997; Myerhoff, 1980). The SDS's membership was critical of the LID and its Socialist Party antecedents for their hierarchical, bureaucratic and centralised organisations (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). Furthermore, they believed that the LID had 'sold out' to the liberal Establishment. These views included a belief that such actions had deviated towards what was seen as propagating the discourse of 'The Establishment' (Bacciocco, 1974; Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). In fact, the SLID's staunch opposition to Communism was viewed by the SDS as another product of the hegemonic status of 'the military-industrial complex' (Lader, 1979). The SDS viewed this as curtailing individual freedom and expression. The accompanying Cold War mentality was seen as limiting people's control over their lives (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). After several years of bickering, the SDS and the LID eventually parted company as the SDS refused to exclude Marxist-Leninist groups such as Progressive Labour (PL) from its organisation (George and Wilcox, 1992).

The SDS sought to promote a more pluralistic and inclusive American society. SDS values, in retrospect, did not translate into a clear plan of action. Moreover, the SDS struggled to develop a coherent political theory for change; many viewed the

SDS as a movement based on a mood searching for a social and political theory to translate the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s into long lasting political change.

## **New Left: Rage against Authority Structures**

Members of the Baby Boom generation, leaving home to improve their minds and their lives, rebelled and attacked the values and traditions their parents had embraced: authority, the 'Protestant work ethic', religion, conformity, marital fidelity, patriotism, and generally whatever 'The Establishment' represented (Anderson, 1996; Rosinow, 1998). Civil rights, women's liberation, sexual permissiveness, the counterculture, the music and the Vietnam War all contributed to fragmenting or alienating Americans (McWilliams, Miller and Miller, 2000, p. 84). The New Left was critical of materialism, rationalism, technology and the system (a *zeitgeist* of negation against established societal mores) (Bone, 1977, p.118-119). Looking back on the New Left's impulse to face up to the prevailing cultural and political traditions of the time, could aptly be summarised by a former New Left activist:

I really felt . . . that we were going to create a culture that really worked. . . . the counterculture and the political movement were the same; if you asked people what they belonged to, they belonged to everything . . . It was a very, very open time. (Darnovsky, Epstein, and Flacks, 1995, p. 77)

This type of openness left a lasting legacy of cultural change which lent itself greater individualistic expression, non-conformity, and greater acceptance of pluralism and accompanying relativism<sup>14</sup> (Darnovsky et al., 1995; George and Wilcox, 1992). The New Left espoused a new set of values that contested ideals of material security, traditionalism, deference to authority and universalism for the conceptualising of normative societal tendencies (Bone, 1977; Eisen and Steinberg, 1980).

To New Left radicals, societal and governmental institutions existed for the maintenance of their own power projection and preservation (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979; McWilliams, 2000). Bone (1977) observed that:

A "Watergate" mentality [is] a conscious effort to delude oneself into believing that institutionalized power has no other justification, responsibility, or source than itself. The rhetoric of the New Left—"technicians of power" "crisis managers,"

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<sup>14</sup> As historian William J. Rorabaugh concludes, the movement fell short essentially because "radicals demanded a more drastic change in society than could possibly take place in a time as short as impatient youth could wait." (McWilliams, 2000, p. 84)

"capitalistic pawns," "pigs"—is used to describe those who possess political power. Implicit in this rhetoric is the assumption that, however technical and material in its operation, political power still incorporates a spiritual relevance that should make it accountable on a scale of universal morality. (p. 121)

To summarise, the New Left was highly suspicious of institutions that wielded political power. New Leftists saw that institutionalised power, when used in a manner devoid of values, was illegitimate (Bone, 1977; McWilliams, 2000; Rising, 1997). New Left is all about delegitimising what was called '*The System*' by differentiating their movement from it. To this point, the foreign policy critique that the New Left provided became intertwined with a cultural critique. The New Left drew a connection that the latter influenced the former. This interconnection was thus translated into not only providing resistance towards the Cold War consensus and the institutions that promoted this, but also a critique that surrounded cultural issues that was seen as a reproduction of the values espoused by these same institutions and power elites (Bone, 1977, p.118-122). The New Left was convinced that through practising a self-constructed set of new values, such as new societal norms, this would help undermine '*The System*' (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). This was a process of negation and self constriction. It was believed that this enhanced collective and individual liberation from what was viewed as a pernicious '*System*' (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). Moreover, this meant that no authority structures were sacrosanct. The New Left described the interlocking relationships of American power and institutional power elites as '*The Establishment*' (Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Mills, 1956).

The United States political institutions possessed an ordinate amount of technological power in the form of a vast web of bureaucratic agencies, coupled with nuclear weapons in an unprecedented war machine the world had never seen before (Bone, 1977; Mills, 1956; Jacobs and Landau, 1966). A mood that pervaded members of the New Left, was that their lives, individual decision-making and autonomy was no longer their own. Resistance, direct action and confrontation became the status quo. This took the form of sit-ins, marches and cultural forms such as folk music of resistance as well as less nuanced methods which simply meant direct clashes with the police. Examples of this was the *Berkeley Free Speech Movement*, 1964; Columbia, 1968 (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979; McWilliams, 2000) and

Kent State University, 1972, to name but a few that took place during the Vietnam War era. Many confrontations took place between activists and 'The Establishment' (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979).

*The New Radicals* (1966), as Jacobs and Landau termed the New Left, were characterised as dismissive of past Leftist movements. The *New Radicals* were appalled by the Old Left's uncritical accommodation with Stalinism in the 1930s. They saw this kind of tolerance as lacking in idealism and distorting the humanistic qualities that Marxism could offer. *The New Radicals* believed that pragmatism had triumphed over egalitarianism (Jacobs and Landau, 1966, p. 8). These *New Radicals* were rooted in social democratic principles and this influenced their visions for the future. However, they discarded the bureaucratic nature of American-styled Keynesianism (Jacobs and Landau, 1966). They also rejected the growing technocratic nature of an increasingly large state and despised what they viewed as the prevailing military industrial complex which they saw as being dominant in the political, economic and social spheres of American life (Bone, 1977; Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Anderson, 1996; Rising, 1997). This mood of disenchantment found an outlet with the ructions that surfaced in the Berkeley *Free Speech Movement* (FSM) in 1964 (Bacciocco, 1974). Additionally, this growing ferment was enhanced with the escalation of the war in Vietnam, particularly following the congressional approval of the Gulf of Tonkin<sup>15</sup> resolution in August 1964 which granted President Johnson the authority to protect American interests in this Cold War theatre (Guttmann, 1980). More importantly, the implementation of the draft caused much anger and anxiety amongst students of a college age. The sentiment felt at that time was that the students' lives were not theirs to control. This produced feelings of suspicion, anger and generational angst (Gross, 1986).

Many of the *New Radicals* felt a desperate sense of disillusionment and a profound sense of alienation. Many of the early New Leftists complained that a lack of societal values and ethics that went far beyond norms of behaviour. The *New Radicals* were more concerned with a perceived lack of ethical considerations concerning the United States' Cold War policy and its ramifications on societal mores (Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Rising, 1997). The New Left contended that the United

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<sup>15</sup> The lonely battle waged in 1964 by Senators Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening (the only men in Congress to vote against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution) has developed into a campaign fought by the Majority Leader (Mike Mansfield), the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations (J. William Fulbright), and many of the more distinguished senators of the Republican party (for example, Clifford Case, John Sherman Cooper, and Thruston B. Morton). (Guttmann, 1980, p. 131)

States' Cold War foreign policy lacked morality, idealism and integrity. The New Left was unwilling to reconcile the difference between ideals, politicians and bureaucrats espoused to the reality of the Cold War foreign policy posture. This posture saw the United States support a dictator in Iran, the Philippines and South Vietnam. They saw such geo-political calculations as lacking moral fibre and alien to their brand of American values. It was believed in a sense that the New Left needed to implement a new American Revolution in terms of federal, state and societal values that were more humanist in nature. The New Left believed that over-reliance on technocratic bureaucracy was leading to a society dislocated in terms of its shared humanity and connectivity (Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Myerhoff, 1980).

Young intellectuals were uneasy because of the paradoxes in the nation, the inconsistencies between ideals and realities in America. The *Port Huron Statement* noted racial bigotry when the national Bill of Rights declared "all men are created equal". It also noted growing national affluence while millions remained in poverty. Presidential statements about peaceful intentions while the administration maintained a costly Cold War military budget seemed contradictory (Anderson, 1996; Bacciocco, 1974). They were troubled by the anticommunism "paranoia" which had resulted in "finger-pointing and comical debate about the most serious of issues" instead of rational discussion on foreign policy. The New Left contended that American society feared change and that Cold War posturing was acting as a corrosive influence on American democratic values (Anderson, 1996; Bone, 1977).

The *Port Huron Statement* outlined SDS's new system and could be interpreted in many ways. First, it was a radical document that clearly was a response to and a rejection of the immediate past; the 1950s. The authors repeated the ideas of older dissidents as they condemned the loneliness, isolation, "emptiness of life," the "powerlessness of ordinary people." Lynd (1980) noted this sense of powerlessness as well as a desire for greater democratic participation. The New Left wanted to demystify the nature of *The Establishment*:

The dominant institutions, SDS then declared, are complex enough to blunt the minds of their potential critics. . . The American political system is not the democratic model of which its glorifiers speak. In actuality it frustrates democracy by confusing the individual citizen, paralysing policy discussion, and consolidating the irresponsible power of military and business interests. (p. 127)

Such a summation echoed Stuart Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* (1960) and C. Wright Mill's *Power Elite* (1956). Mills stated that the burden of decision making should be placed in their hands - not established elites. The American people, in Mill's view, needed the means to make decisions that determine their own individual outcomes – redressing the belief in a democracy for the people rather than for the establishment elites. The New Left through the, *Port Huron Statement*, resonated deeply rooted themes of 'American Democratic power' drawing on traditions that the 'people are the ultimate arbiters of democratic decision making (Farber and Bailey, 2001, p. 31). Moreover, *The Statement* called for egalitarianism and greater individual direction over federal policies that affected an individual's autonomy, "As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation. ... That the individual share in those social decisions determine the quality and direction of his life." (Farber and Bailey, 2001, p. 31.) Quality of life and the desire to achieve greater self directedness were to become one of the hallmarks of the New Left. Bacciocco (1974) observed that New Leftists protested for a variety of reasons. They offered young activists a vehicle that could further their individual expression. Additionally, themes relating to the quality of life issues were to play a significant role that resonated throughout the New Social Movements, which were a direct descendant of the 1960s New Left (Brand, 1990).

The New Left therefore originated as an individualistic reaction to both personal and social problems. Each student went into the movement that he believed best suited his interests and needs. Some joined radical organizations confined to a single campus, whose members participated in demonstrations around a variety of issues. (Bacciocco, 1974, p. 20)

Myerhoff (1980) described the New Left's challenge to authority as a reaction to the perceived paternalistic nature of a society fashioned in the image of its parents' generations. The values of the New Left represented a 'new humanism', and the mores of this 'new humanism' represented an inner-directed search for personal fulfilment (McWilliams, 2000; Myerhoff, 1980). This search went beyond issues of economic security and the gaining of social status (Bone, 1977). The New Left, while espousing communitarian visions, possessed no tangible plan for political change. What the New Left lacked in a coherent plan for social and political change, it did not lack in a desire to see its members self liberated on an individual level. An

individualistic root took hold early on from the founding principles of the *Port Huron Statement*.

One of the early New Left clashes with *The Establishment* occurred at the University of California at Berkeley (UC Berkeley), October 1, 1964. University administrators placed a ban on people handing out political paraphernalia on the Berkeley campus. This sparked a response where large numbers of students gathered on the campus' main public focal point and meeting place, Sproul Plaza. The students called for greater free speech and the right to be treated in what they viewed as a less bureaucratic and impersonal manner. Many of the students believed they were part of an education factory that was merely meeting education targets of the state and federal government that was labelled the '*multiversity*'.

The multiversity is not an educational centre, but a highly efficient industry: it produces bombs, other war machines, a few token "peaceful" machines, and enormous numbers of safe, highly skilled, and respectable automatons to meet the immediate needs of business and government. This institution, affectionately called "Cal" by many of you, or, as the Daily Cal might put it, "The Big U", does not deserve a response of loyalty and allegiance from you. There is only one proper response to Berkeley from undergraduates: that you organize and split this campus wide open! From this point on, do not misunderstand me. My intention is to convince you that you do nothing less than to begin an open, fierce, and thoroughgoing rebellion on this campus. (Bacciocco, 1974, p. 151)

In effect, the student ferment at UC Berkeley merely expressed a growing disillusionment felt as espoused by the New Left towards traditional entrenched values in a sense of indignation towards morals which were viewed as impersonal and conformist. This spark that occurred at UC Berkeley became famously known as the '*Berkeley Free Speech Movement*.' Mario Savio, one of the primary leaders of the *Free Speech Movement*, notably summarised student disgruntlement:

There comes a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart that you can't take part; you can't even tacitly take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the levers, upon all the apparatus and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people



who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all. (Lustig, 2002, p. 216)

The New Left resonated with contestation; individual emancipation was viewed as a key tactic towards not only challenging the system but also serving the need to define identity through self construction (Myerhoff, 1980). This spirit of resistance typified the New Left. Short on specifics and unclear about exact alternatives, the New Left protesters, to paraphrase the *Port Huron Statement*, rejected “the modest comfort” offered by the American Dream and looked “uncomfortably to the world we inherit.” Inspired by the civil rights movement, they wished, somehow, to create “the beloved community” Martin Luther King advocated. Idealistically, they thought they could make the United States a more generous, peaceful and just society. In the mid-1960s, when America's involvement in the Vietnam War began to escalate dramatically, this relatively small student movement would explode. Its critique of the United States, which had seemed quite radical even to most young people in the early 1960s, suddenly began to make sense to hundreds of thousands of students. The Vietnam War would make many Americans begin to doubt that either Republicans or Democrats, conservative or liberal political leaders, understood how to create a morally just and truly democratic society (Farber and Bailey, 2001, p. 32).

The achievements of the New Left in the United States were noted as being substantial according to former Washington State University political scientist, Dr. McGehee. He notes “...the student Left can claim considerable credit for ending the Vietnam War” (McGehee, 1995, p. 11). Moreover, McGehee (1995) notes that the New Left placed significant pressure on the Johnson and the Nixon administrations.

In sum, McGehee (1995) believes the failures of the New Left lay in its own success. He goes on to state that:

As impressive as this record of accomplishments was, the success of the New Left contained the seeds of its own eventual demise. It was, by and large, a single issue movement. When the war and the draft disappeared, the student Left was without a rallying cry. (p. 11)

From the outset, the New Left believed totalitarianism manifested itself across a range of different societal spheres, ranging from foreign policy, class inequality,

university bureaucracies, 'the military-industrial complex' and democratic structures that were seen to encourage head-to-head competition between interest groups. Furthermore, the New Left protested against traditional concepts of family, monogamous sexual practices, as well as values given to the accumulation of material goods and occupational status (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Lader, 1979). Moreover, New Left radicals also challenged existing notions of American patriotism and proposed the adoption of a pacifist approach to foreign policy with an aim to ending the Cold War (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Lader, 1979).

The New Left therefore naturally tended to identify with groups considered to be on the fringes of society. These groups, including minorities, were viewed as being estranged from the dominant values of American society. Identification with these groups, different values and mores were conceived as being a rebuttal to perceived totalitarianism (Bone, 1977; Isserman and Kazin, 2000). Corporate liberalism was considered by the New Left to be an agent of repression. The New Left deemed corporate liberalism particularly pervasive. This was largely because its means of coercion was believed to involve the use of liberal rhetoric to disguise authoritarian tendencies. Corporate liberalism, the New Left contended, gained consent through the apparatus of institutions which it presided over, such as the government, the *multiversity* and even extending into the corporate world (Bacciocco, 1974).

The essence of the New Left's critique was its insistence that corporate liberalism with its hegemonic status was viewed as restricting personal autonomy. Furthermore, the New Left used this term interchangeably to denote what they called *The Establishment* or as generically denoting bureaucracy. Lynd (1980) noted through the SDS's *The Port Huron Statement* (1962) that the New Left sort to demystify the nature of corporate liberalism.

Furthermore, Lynd (1980) described corporate liberalism as being part of a historical change from the authoritarian styled management of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The economic and management needs of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, required organisations to act in a more inclusive and cooperative manner. This development occurred through the increasing presence of large corporations that required large bureaucracies to manage their day-to-day affairs. According to Lynd (1980), large work forces that sometimes dominate modern society require a more coercive style

of management. One of the prevailing themes of the New Left was its rebellion against its authority structures.

Accordingly, the celebrated New Left revolt against authority is especially a revolt against paternalistic, indirect authority, which hides the iron hand of power in the velvet glove of rhetorical idealism. A notorious instance is the so-called channelling policy of the Selective Service System. (SSS) (Lynd, 1980, p. 127)

Neo-Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse also encouraged the New Left's critique of corporate liberalism. Marcuse contended that prevailing authority structures were totalitarian in nature. Consequently, social change was made difficult and this additionally prevented self-expression and individuality (King, 1972). Marcuse recommended that student groups such as SDS needed to challenge existing cultural mores and the legitimacy of existing power structures. This was termed the '*great refusal*' (Alway, 1995). SDS became a mass movement (particularly from 1965 onwards) that provided this sort of sustained challenge. SDS was particularly adept at galvanising people around local issues (usually related to local university life) such as relaxing dormitory regulations, university discipline procedures and campus regulations pertaining to political activity (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Lader, 1979). The use of local issues, as history reveals, acted as something of a dress rehearsal to protest the Vietnam War.

Additionally, the NSMs from the 1970s onwards also used local issues to highlight national concerns. The two case studies that have been researched for this thesis represent such a tendency. As a point of reiteration, the two case studies concern the peace and activist movements of the Coalition for Central America (CCA) in the 1980s, and the Palouse Peace Coalition (PPC), established in 2001. These two groups operated on a local level - one in the conservative state of Idaho and the conservative region of Eastern Washington. CCA were headquartered in the university towns of Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington. These NSM groups, on observation, aptly defined the NSM mantra of 'think locally, act globally'. Like many other NSM groups, these two groups shared many instances of New Left ideology. This is why it is necessary to denote the New Left, its ideology, its practises and beliefs, to establish an understanding of how NSMs came into being. Consequently, New Left ideology became more diffuse through the vehicle of NSMs.

This placed an emphasis on self expression and personal identity and in short, the NSMs drove a proclivity towards the individualisation of the American Left.

The grand narrative of totalitarianism curtailing individual freedom was finally given its greatest ferment through the Vietnam War and the draft. This ultimately transformed the New Left from a movement focusing on community organisation towards one that became a mass movement fuelled by subjective personal radicalism (Lieberman, 2004). This issue elicited great anger because it directly affected the future options of students (the draft) (Cockburn, 2007). The New Left saw this event as curtailing their life choices and corporate liberalism was seen as the vehicle through which individual freedom was being curtailed.

Lieberman (2004) suggested that many radicals who joined *The Movement* from the mid 1960s onwards were guided by more individualistic and spontaneous styled activism than those who joined *The Movement* before 1965. Furthermore, many of what was considered to be the new breed of radicals (1965 onwards) was from state universities and working class backgrounds (Lieberman, 2004). These radicals strongly opposed corporate liberalism believing it to be a major illness afflicting American society. At first, they viewed corporate liberalism as causing oppression at home in the guise of racial discrimination (Bacciocco, 1974; Lieberman, 2004). Furthermore, corporate liberalism was seen, by the New Left, as cynical and oppressive in nature. With each cyclical process the oppressiveness of corporate liberalism was seen to deepen. As student opposition grew against the Vietnam War, students would point to what they called the military-industrial complex as becoming increasingly imbedded and interlocking with established power elites (Bone, 1977; Lieberman, 2004). Initially, both the new breed of radicals and their predecessors became aware of perceived authoritarian actions displayed by university bureaucracy throughout the United States (issues surrounding free speech). Then ultimately, through the Vietnam War, prevailing authority structures at home were perceived as embodying all the feelings of alienation, oppression and disillusionment felt by the New Left (Bacciocco, 1974; Lieberman, 2004). A mood of alienation and loss of control over their lives facilitated this gathering storm that spiralled with great intensity through a radical impulse to assert individuality as a reaction against perceived totalitarianism (Lieberman, 2004).

## **A Propensity for Reflexivity**

More importantly, the quest for liberation shaped a context in which the New Left developed a propensity for self-reflection. As far as individualism was concerned, an emphasis on this reflexivity encouraged continued searches for self-definition (Feenberg, 1986; Gross, 1986). The New Left provided a vehicle for the expression of emerging identities in the 1960s, perceived as being on the fringes of society. Examples of such emerging identities included radical feminists, Latino civil rights groups, gay and lesbian rights groups, the burgeoning environmental groups as well as a whole host of other groups that could be categorised by being micro-political in nature (Kauffman, 1995). These groups were to come to prominence after the disillusion of the New Left in the late 1960s. They were to form the basis of what became known as the New Social Movements (NSM) (Brand, 1990; Lader, 1979). Concepts espoused by the student radicals in the 1960s, also became a mantra for the burgeoning New Social Movements that followed on from the New Left movements (Brand, 1990; Epstein, 2002), both of whom asserted that an individual's way of life and politics were one and the same (Feenberg, 1986; Gross, 1986). These identities became constituted in the American New Left and its direct descendent, the NSMs (O'Neil, 2001). In sum, these characteristics resisted prevailing traditions that separated the private from the political (Isserman and Kazin, 2000). Such a development bought forth the politicisation of personal choices (Jacoby, 1973; Isserman and Kazin, 2000). The New Left therefore transformed cultural issues into political issues. For example, the reaction to perceived authoritarianism emanating from social structures such as family and church were viewed as a manifestation of corporate liberalism (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Lader, 1979). When the New Left chose revolution after 1966, it also lost sight of Al Haber's counsel that "the established system is too decentralized, has too strong a control of the means of violence and facilities of organization for revolution either to be organized or to succeed" (p. 245).

The majority of SDS members, however, were undisciplined, unscholarly, obsessed with their own alienation, mesmerized by the Third World and afraid of the draft. Instead of persevering in a revolution of their own making, they decided to follow the dictates of the PLP or to serve as mercenaries in the army of the Black Panthers, the Viet Cong or some other battle group of the Third World (p. 247). The

New Left introduced a discourse that challenged class-based politics and traditional notions of solidarity. It could be argued that the ramifications of such are seismic.

The New Left, influenced significantly by Mills (1956) in the 1960s, evinced post-material developments and ultimately sought to challenge and delegitimize prevailing American power elites. This interpretation was a direct challenge to these authority structures and their societal mores. Moreover, the New Left critique also centred on pointing out the failures of the American Left and Labourism.

The New Left was motivated by the sense of disillusionment that the Left had not delivered greater equality as well as their perceived failure to recognise pluralistic differences and the variance of identities amongst the working and middle classes. Additionally, one of the noticeable features of the New Left was its lack of a coherent plan for social and political change (Gross, 1986; Lader, 1979). To many observers, the movement seemed angry and possessed of an anarchistic and nihilistic tendency. By the end of the 1960s, the movement seemed to have fragmented into a myriad of micro political interest groups (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). Four decades later, the New Left and the NSMs have continued the enduring struggle to develop a cohesive galvanising plan for political and economic transformation.<sup>16</sup> Democratic substitutes comprised of a wide spectrum of ideological perspectives, ranging from New Deal Corporate Liberalism, Stalinist style dictatorships, centralised Socialism with its proclivity for command planning and the Social Democratic project featured welfarism, which like other ideological perspectives, saw the New Left consign it as being overly centralised and bureaucratic in nature (Lader, 1979; McWilliams, 2000; Rising, 1997). Moreover, the New Left and its descendent, the NSM's, demonstrated a fragmentation that made the construction of a class in social analysis impossible (McGehee, 1995). Such an analysis has traditionally acted as a road map for the Left (Frankel, 1997).

## **Herbert Marcuse: The Quest for Liberation**

The Vietnam War inspired a new organic form of politics in the American landscape. This new brand of politics was revolutionary in nature as it turned the

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<sup>16</sup> Professor Russell Jacoby asserts the New Left lacked a well thought out social analysis, '... yet because the left is a left it retains a social analysis of society. The very problem, however, is that this analysis degenerates more and more into slogans, thoughtless finds of the moment. Fetishized subjectivity attracts magnetically fetishized slogans that serve more to sort out ones friends and enemies, than figure out the structure of reality' (Jacoby, 1973, p. 57).

existing paradigm as exposed by the 'Old Left' which focussed on economic materialism and class consciousness to dreams of a revolution by the New Left fostered under the auspices of a cultural revolution (Epstein, 1993.p.23).

The New Left and its associate movements such as the counter culture felt a deep sense of alienation from the existing social order. This produced a desire for revolution that was influenced by the post-war era which they witnessed to a rapidly changing society and economy. The insuring socio-economic pressures helped produce a reaction that deeply impacted the 'Baby Boom' generation that largely constituted the New Left (Epstein, 1993. p, 23).

The early New Left were committed to a cultural as well as an economic revolution. They sort to create a society more egalitarian and socially just as well as allowing individual's great autonomy over their own lives. They wanted to achieve this change through what they saw as a new set of values. They believed in concepts of community and cooperation but more often than not the focus on cultural issues lead them into a propensity of establishing themselves as a locus of control. This being said, they were of a belief that they were committed to a shared sense of community and cooperation surrounding cultural issues. Perhaps their lack of coherence may be attributed to the fact that in the United States political and cultural context talk of revolution was alienating to so many as a term of discursive representation. As the Vietnam War intensified, therefore affecting the lives of many 'Baby Boomers', their ardour for revolution became more apparent. With this in mind, the term 'revolution' became widely used among the Mid Left from the mid-1960s onward (Epstein, 1993. p.25). The tumultuous events of the Vietnam War helped facilitate a mood from protest to resistance amongst the New Left. They looked to theoreticians such as Herbert Marcuse for inspiration. Marcuse was able to provide a theory for political and cultural resistance as well as individual liberation (Bacciocco, 1974).

German born philosopher, Herbert Marcuse was a figure that loomed large over the political thinking of the New Left. Joan Alway (1995) labelled Marcuse as being so influential on the development and fermentation of the New Left, that he was described as the 'father' of the New Left. The 1960s was the era of Marcuse's greatest influence. His teachings on creating a new society based on eliminating oppression espoused mores of self-expression and greater individuality.

Furthermore, Marcuse inspired a new type of radicalism that directly contested the legitimacy of existing U.S. power bureaucracy and traditional mores. Marcuse was known to have personally mentored New Left radicals, such as Abbie Hoffman and Angela Davis (Alway, 1995; DeLeon, 1994). Indeed, Marcuse's name became inextricably linked to the New Left radicalism of the 1960s and the values in which it sought to engender (DeLeon, 1994).

Herbert Marcuse, as a key philosopher of the New Left, can also be identified as the progenitor of a new cultural sensibility. Kimball (2000) believed Marcuse's enduring influence over student radicals was his ability to combine the psychology of Freud with Marxian critiques of capitalism. This infused the New Left with a dimension that had its intellectual grounding in the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (Frankfurt School), famously acknowledged as the architects of Neo-Marxist critical theory (Rising, 1997). Marcuse believed that Marxism needed to be reworked for the contemporary setting of late capitalism. Moreover, Marcuse considered Marxism to be lacking in emphasis, specifically regarding individuality (Alway, 1995). Marcuse contended his new paradigm of libido rationality went beyond traditional Marxist concepts of class-consciousness and collectivism. Marcuse wanted to provide a synthesis between Marxian orthodoxy and a reflexive psychological emphasis on self-liberation and this ultimately became a conceptualisation that facilitated greater expressions of individualism and resistance (Alway, 1995; DeLeon, 1994).

Marcuse asserted the unconscious contained a great capacity in its natural drive for happiness, as evidenced in cultural forms such as philosophy, art, music and other forms of self-expression. Contrary to Freud, Marcuse did not believe that society was inevitably pre-disposed towards restraining its natural and instinctual drives towards pleasure (Alway, 1995; DeLeon, 1994). Marcuse envisioned a society in which the repression of libido could be transformed into libido rationality. In short, this was described as a state of freedom from the dominating forces of capitalism and technology. Once freed from this perceived enslavement, people could then be free to exercise their creative spontaneous bent (DeLeon, 1994). It is clear that Marcuse's arguments had assisted the New Left towards an encompassing philosophy that simultaneously preached personal liberation and cultural reformation.



Marcuse described the dominant forces of capitalism in both physical and psychological terms. Existing power structures were also sometimes described as a machine-like metaphor. This phraseology evoked images of control and manipulation in the minds of the New Leftists. In regards to challenging the restraint of potential libido rationality, Marcuse contended that dissidents needed to challenge the legitimacy of societal power structures (also known as *The Establishment* or, more generically, bureaucracy). The underlying intention of this challenge that Marcuse articulated was to instil a growing sense of alienation felt by many groups such as those in the New Left and to encourage them to gain greater control over their lives. The New Left constantly reiterated the growing complexity of bureaucracy. For example, *The Port Huron Statement* (1964) featured a sustained and impassioned critique on U.S. corporatism as well as the Cold War consensus (Lader, 1979). It was thought that bureaucratic structures had come to control people's lives without negotiation or consultation, thus limiting their personal choices, and ultimately their individuality (Lader, 1979).

This premise that was originally propagated by the *New Left Review*, which was known to influence New Left radicals in the United States. The intellectual leaders of the student New Left, such as Tom Hayden and Al Haber, wanted to grow a movement that would provide a powerful critique aimed to expose coercive effects of faceless bureaucracy, bridging the gap and providing a new vision that sought to challenge the perceived omnipotent nature of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy was seen as an oppressive agent on individual autonomy and was viewed to be fashioned in many guises; for example, through Cold War liberalism, the 'military-industrial complex' and the State, to name a few. Furthermore, traditional mores were seen to underpin the hegemonic status of bureaucracy. In essence, bureaucracy was blamed as an agent of dehumanisation that consequently caused individuals to feel powerless resulting in feelings of discontentment (Bacciocco, 1974; Bones, 1977). Lader (1979) posited that the perceived alienation felt by the New Left was a result of pressure to adhere to traditional Puritan values of work, obligation and delayed gratification (Lader, 1979). It can be argued that such alienation inevitably led towards a feeling of anger ultimately leading towards outwards forms of resistance.

Marcuse's emancipatory vision was of a liberated society in which labour could be transformed in providing societal outlets that consequently encouraged

greater self-awareness (Alway, 1995; DeLeon, 1994). Additionally, contained in this emancipatory transformation, was a focus on greater displays of individuality that many thought by its expression was not only helping to liberate themselves but also challenged the existing modes of domination. Marcuse's revolution of consciousness was to be a personal one, which involved a focus on self-development, which led to greater self-liberation. As participants underwent this process by adopting new values and even mores that were contrary to those that had been predominant, Marcusean styled self-liberation would challenge the legitimacy of *The Establishment*. According to the Marcusean doctrine, de-legitimisation would provide a pathway towards the overthrow of the controls and restraints imposed on individuals by capitalism, in its dominant, instrumentalist and psychological approach (Alway, 1995; DeLeon, 1994).

One of Marcuse's key concepts was the hypothesis of surplus repression. Marcuse articulated that one of the conditions leading to capitalism was material scarcity (Alway, 1995). As a construction motivated by scarcity, capitalism demanded the suppression of human instincts and expression in the pursuit of survival. Marcuse likened this situation to fulfilling Freud's reality dictum. Furthermore, Marcuse argued that the prosperous nature of late capitalism no longer required the sublimation of human instinctual drives, or in other words, the repression of the libido pleasure principle (Alway, 1995). Capitalism's requirements and its emphasis on materialism as a philosophy produced a paradigm that both rewarded and promoted the use of scientific rationalism (Bone, 1977). This development caused capitalist society to organise libido, channelling it into outlets that were perceived as far less disruptive (Alway, 1995). Marcuse contended that this led to a repressive society that inhibited individuality, consequently casting people and society into a one-dimensional view of reality (Alway, 1995; Diggins, 1973). In pointing out this perceived repression, Marcuse proposed a counter vision of emancipation in which the ongoing reality of the suppression of the pleasure principle was overturned. One of the key elements to Marcuse's critique was the nature of how society's repression of libido was organised. This analysis also turned towards how societal groups consented to this domination (Alway, 1995). In short, Marcuse envisioned a society no longer subordinated to the instrumentalist requirements of working to survive. Work in a freer society would encourage self-expression, leading into greater

personal autonomy, and the realisation of a liberated individual and as a consequence the future liberation of society (Alway, 1995; Diggins, 1973; Kimball, 2000).

## **New Left Ferment and Post-Material Values**

One of the key elements that influenced the New Left's many discourses and critiques was scepticism towards U.S. foreign policy and a questioning of the impact of the Cold War consensus (Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Rising, 1997). Arguably the New Left's foreign policy and cultural critiques were not mutually exclusive. Critiques of this era were typically characterised by themes of self-reflection, emancipation through action and a distrust of authority structures ranging from the Federal government and traditional societal mores (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1992; Lynd, 1980). Scholars such as C. Wright Mills and Herbert Marcuse were amongst the influential whose teachings shaped the development of the thought of the New Left (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1992). These discourses fuelled an intense sense of generational alienation in the early 1960s. Marcuse's message, coupled with the teachings of C. Wright Mills, encouraged the New Left not only to challenge existing authority structures, but also to support radical egalitarianism (Lieberman, 2004). The sense of inclusiveness, latent in these teachings, created a propensity for decentralisation and maximum self-expression. This in turn opened the New Left to a vast range of influences, which ultimately, as evidenced by the SDS, led to factionalism.

Noted University of Michigan political scientist, Ronald Inglehart (1997), observes that the Baby Boomers were the first generation in American history to experience economic security. The Baby Boom generation, featuring so prominently in the New Left, significantly came of age during the 1960s. Baby Boomers were the product of a vastly different socio-political climate than that of their parents' generation. Baby Boomers never experienced the effects of material deprivation and the insecurity of a global war. Inglehart's (1997) research reveals that the World War II generation was more inclined, in contrast to the Baby Boomers, to place importance on a value set predisposed towards material security and gaining affluence. Arguably, such value orientations added emphasis to the American national ethos centred on the 'American Dream'.

The post-war economic boom heralded unprecedented wealth in the United States, helping millions of people to experience the national cultural goal of achieving the 'American Dream' for the first time (Abrahams, 2006; Isserman and Kazin, 2000).

The significance of such trends relating to Leftist politics was more suitably predisposed to traditional notions of class collectivism and cohesive solidarity (Inglehart, 1997; Lerner, 1982). Whilst the moderate Leftist politics of American Labourism and Roosevelt's New Deal coalition did not highlight the individual differences that underlay American society, it was hampered by disparities in economic, racial and social equality for large numbers of people (Diggins, 1973; Lerner, 1982).

According to Inglehart's (1997) research, a societal shift in values implied that class collective action gives ground to post-material values of individual self-expression, self-fulfilment and de-traditionalisation. The consequence of such a shift in cultural values transformed the view of the individual as the primary agent of social change. This pertains to traditional Leftist concepts regarding social transformation, in which a cohesive and recognisable class was thought to be the best means of agitating and promoting social modification. The New Left notably provided the ferment leading to a new progressive discourse that increasingly gained impetus as the 1960s progressed.

## **The New Social Movements and George McGovern: 'Come Home America'**

The New Social Movements which emerged out of the fragmented New Left played a vital role in the George McGovern candidacy of 1972. Running as an anti-war candidate and a proponent of Eugene McCarthy style 'New Politics', McGovern reenergised 1960s New Leftists (Isserman and Kazin, 2000).

Proclamations made on the campaign trail excited activists on the Left. McGovern stated, for example, that: "We dedicate ourselves to the eradication of racism, and poverty, and injustice and to a new assertion of the right of every citizen of this land to the pursuit of justice" (Baer, 2000, p. 12).

The candidacy of McGovern clearly signalled that the Democratic Party was embracing the Liberalism of the New Politics' agenda. An example of this was evidenced in the Democratic Party's platforms. For example, one of the key foreign

policy planks called for “the immediate and full withdrawal of Americans from Southeast Asia, reductions in military spending to fund domestic programs and increased cooperation with the Communist world” (Baer, 2000. p. 23).

McGovern’s domestic policies focused on extending and protecting individual and social groups’ rights. Such thinking was very much in line with the ‘New Politics’ inspired ‘Rights Revolution’ of the 1970s. Baer (2000) described this development as ‘rights-based liberalism’ (p. 54). Such positions clearly took one side of the well-publicised cultural Conservative versus Liberal division on cultural issues that was having an effect in the United States in the 1970s. For example, the Democratic party embraced the following positions: amnesty for those who had evaded the Draft during the Vietnam War, tighter gun laws, Federal implementation of school bussing to assist greater racial integration in the public school system, the reconsideration and potential revolutionising step of eliminating the American Electoral College system and finally, full legislative sanction of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (Baer, 2000, p. 24).

The Democratic Party’s embrace of ‘New Politics’ yielded further departures. Economic policy was also subject to revision. For example, McGovern’s economic policies side-lined American style Keynesianism, in the form of the New Deal Liberalism’s focus, that created demand-side economic growth courtesy of centralised intervention. McGovern, as an alternative, adopted a political philosophy of what British historian Gareth Davies regarded as the Liberalism of entitlement. In essence, this variant of Liberalism viewed the poorer strata of society as the sufferers of societal stigmatisation leading to neglect. McGovern proposed that such a marginalised group should have unreserved right to Federal income entitlements including additional benefits. Such a provision would be funded by the redistribution of income. This scheme highly motivated New Social Movement groups such as welfare rights lobbyists, who worked hard to increase societal tolerance towards this marginalised group. The Democratic Party’s 1972 platform significantly included a plank called for a national guaranteed income for all Americans (Baer, 2000. p. 25).

Despite McGovern’s best efforts, Richard Nixon won in a resounding landslide, with 62 per cent of the popular vote. Cultural issues undoubtedly were a key factor as Nixon won every southern state. Alarming to the Democratic Party, Nixon made history by carrying the majority of the white union vote. Election results

made stark reading for the Democratic Party as the white working class, a key component of the New Deal Coalition, abandoned the Democratic Party in unprecedented numbers. Yet in spite of such an electorate defeat at the Presidential level, the Democratic Party was successfully able to maintain control of the House of Representatives and the Senate (Baer, 2000).

The failed McGovern campaign of 1972 illustrated that a segment of the ex-New Leftists, in concert with a new breed of younger activists of the 1970s, drifted back into mainstream Democratic politics. At first, this migration occurred in local politics. From the outset there was no retreat from SDS style critiques and emphasis on 'New Politics'. This stress on 'New Politics', as mentioned, called for greater equality, radical democracy and a non-interventionist United States foreign policy. The former New Left and its new younger activists steered away from traditional Leftism surrounding economicism, exploitation by the capitalist mode of production, economic injustice through the unequal distribution of wealth and its alienating consequences (Adams, 1993). By 1975, with the end of the Vietnam War, a tactical departure had taken a noticeable shape. On one front, a cluster of 'cadre' groups, drawing motivation from 1930s radicalism, sent their ex-student comrades into industrial plants and factories in an attempt to provide an outlet for dissent at the end of the long and seemingly enduring post-war boom. Moreover, efforts were made at radicalising the ranks of these factory workers. In contrast, another association of ex-SDS'ers including other anti-war activists—of whom Tom Hayden featured—were intent on establishing their own sway inside the Democratic 'reform movement' at a local level. The loosely aligned array of consumer rights, the ecological movement and public interest organisations, buttressed by a few supportive progressive unions, having survived the 1972 McGovern campaign sought to join the 'Reform Democrats' in further challenging the existing paradigm of 'machine politics' (Davis, 1986).

The problem for radicals in the 1970s was a personal one after the demise of the New Left (O'Neil, 2001). The radicals wanted to live in a way that was true to Leftist beliefs in a nation governed by conservative ideas and consumerist behaviour. Many New Left activists infused the ideas of the 1960s (O'Neil, 2001). The choice between academia and capitalism was a simple one. For example, in academia, many gravitated towards graduate school and this number increased greatly, because these radicals were convinced that academia was not divorced from

conveying powerful ideas (O'Neil, 2001). They did not believe in dispassionate discourse, taking a discursive view that power was embedded in the use of language. With political action failing, the university became an increasingly attractive option for many leftover radicals (O'Neil, 2001).

Many Leftists entered academia in the 1970s and 80s, because university offered them a bastion of a pluralistic and tolerant environment in which their New Leftist ideals were still interwoven into their personal identity (O'Neil, 2001). Not only could these former activists take refuge from what they saw as a consumeristic moneyed culture, they could also remain politically radical as well as achieving scholastic success. The university became a retreat for New Leftists (O'Neil, 2001). Feeling comfortable in the environment, they sought to excel professionally and use their positions to influence students in the wider community for good. It was not a concerted programme of indoctrination but rather a seamless cultural fit (O'Neil, 2001). Many New Left veterans, as time passed, were constantly reviewing the ideas of the youth. They did impact the undergraduates with the impulse of the 1960s, but not in an overtly political way (O'Neil, 2001). This is because the 1990s generation was never militantly radicalised as their 1960s professors perhaps were.

## **A Change of Discourse: The Conservative Backlash**

By 1969 the New Left fragmented, splintering into several groups that became known as the New Social Movements. These movements included feminist, gay and lesbian rights and Latino Civil Rights groups, the environmental movement and a splintering of the African American Civil Rights Movement as championed by Dr Martin Luther King. The Black Panther Movement continued to gain recognition and recruits and what seemed to mark this diffusion of the New Left was that each group seemed to identify itself through differences rather than commonalities (Feenberg, 1986). The political trend of micro politics was that of the politics of difference and identity (Feenberg, 1986; Kauffman, 1995). The main themes of the New Left however, continued on despite the splintering as each of these groups held onto its basic tenets, including decentralisation, egalitarianism, grass roots participatory 'democracy', anti-authoritarianism and anti-establishment ethos, distrust of bureaucratisation, and a belief in decision making by consensus (Bone, 1977: Bacciocco, 1974: Feenberg, 1986: Lader, 1979).

The rise of the New Left throughout the 1960s and particularly its involvement from 1965 onwards in protesting the Vietnam War and the Draft, deeply shook the Democratic Party. This was witnessed in the disastrous 1968 Democratic convention held in Chicago, in which the Democratic Party saw something of an implosion both inside the convention centre and outside the convention centre as Roosevelt's New Deal coalition was shattered before their eyes (Abrahams, 2006; Baer, 2000; McWilliams and Miller 2000; Ness, 2004; Rising 1997). The Democratic Party was divided and fractured between its broad and conservative elements, and particularly between those who supported the Vietnam War and those who did not (Abrahams, 2000). Conservative Democrats from the South also felt a sense of alienation as many had reservations about the Civil Rights Act of 1965 (Abrahams, 2000). Conservative Democrats from the South also felt a sense of alienation as many had reservations about the Civil Rights Act of 1965 (Abrahams, 2000). Richard Nixon to the presidency in 1968, with the consent of his so-called 'silent majority', set the United States on a more Conservative and reactionary course (Abrahams, 2006; Ness, 2004).

What is interesting to note as the 1970s progressed through the tumultuous events of the final days of the Vietnam War, the Watergate Scandal, Nixon's resignation and the onset of economic recession and Jimmy Carter's infamous quote about an American Malaise, is that the anti-establishment homily of the New Left was simply turned upside down then ironically used by the Conservatives (Abrahams, 2006; Ness, 2004).

The Conservative takeover of the Republican Party and the success of Republican presidential candidates pushed the American political landscape to the Right (Abrahams, 2006; Baer, 2000; Ness, 2004). Even the successful presidential campaign of Bill Clinton in 1992, and his subsequent re-election in 1996, did not end Conservative domination, as the Democratic Party followed this realignment towards Conservatism (Ness, 2004). Clinton's policies seemed at odds with the American Liberalism of the 1960's. Examples of this were his famous quote 'of ending welfare as we know it' and welfare policies featuring time limits and the adoption of Workfare<sup>17</sup> (Moore, 1997). To combat the Gingrich revolution<sup>18</sup> of 1994, Clinton

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<sup>17</sup> Workfare is a programme in which welfare receipts are required to do a minimum amount of work in order to receive their welfare payments.

<sup>18</sup> The revolution saw the Republican Party in the midterm elections of 1995 gain congressional control for the first time since 1954. Headed by Newt Gingrich the Republicans pledged to enact an ultra-Conservative agenda containing 10 items. This ambitious programme was known as the Contract with America (Abraham, 2001).



launched a 'Get Tough on Crime' initiative which was to have the effect of increasing the proportion of Americans who were incarcerated (Abraham, 2001).

After the culmination of the Clinton era, which was shrouded in controversy, the stage was set for the Conservative juggernaut to gather steam again, especially regarding deregulation (Ness, 2004). The presidency of George W. Bush, first elected in 2000, saw the New Right's project further enacted. Welfare became privatised through the help of faith-based organisations, trickle-down economics and a series of regressive tax cuts that favoured corporate America rather than the middle class (Abraham, 2001).

President Bush clearly supported former governor Mitt Romney's comment that Republicans are all about 'taking a weed whacker to regulation' (Moore, 2008). Essentially however, the discourse has remained the same, with continual attacks on Liberalism, Anti-statism, an individualistic theme of equality and justice through the auspices of the free market. The word 'Liberalism', in the popular mindset anyway, has become so tarnished that even Democratic nominees for office preferred the word 'progressive' nowadays.

In summary, the discourse started and shaped by the New Left has had a profound effect. By introducing a more individualist tenor, through calls for decentralisation and railing against the Federal government and its programmes, the New Left, once fully disintegrated had perhaps inadvertently assisted a shift in the American political economy. The New Right was more successfully and more strategically able to utilise this to an impressive extent. There are many more explanations than just this one, but one could argue that this was one of the key components in the unfolding events of the American political history from the 1960s to the present. Coupled with the rise of Neoliberalism which gathered pace in the 1970s, the Left has been buffeted by changing political, cultural and significant economic shifts. These shifts have naturally had an effect of intensifying an accumulative society. Neoliberalism actively promotes Privatism in all its forms. Needless to say, Collectivism can perhaps be described as counterintuitive.

Many scholars have suggested that the sixties introduced an enhancement of individualistic atomisation in which its themes profoundly revolutionised the United States (Gross, 1986; Lieberman, 2004). This atomisation has even been suggested

by renowned political scientist Ronald Inglehart in 1997 to be part of a wider trend known to be a postmodernist/post-materialist value set (Inglehart, 1997).

The successful election of Ronald Reagan to the Presidency in November 1980 signalled the potency of the amalgam which became known as the New Right. In some ways these echoed the themes of the New Left in that they called for more personal autonomy from state control, decentralisation and a desire to exercise a greater control over their own individual life from governmental control. The New Right was successfully able to articulate a discourse in a right wing manner (Ness, 2004). Like the New Left, the 'New Politics' of Conservative single issues, such as protesting the Supreme Court's 1963 decision to ban prayer in public schools and the Court's 1973 decision in the case of *Roe v Wade* which immediately sparked the emergence of the anti-abortion movement, dissatisfaction with implementation of school bussing and a growing middle class backlash against Johnson's Great Society policies (Abrahams, 2006; Baer, 2000; Davis, 1981; Ness, 2004). The Conservative Movement made much of perceptions that Johnson's Great Society programmes were providing something for nothing. Inevitably, this angered some sections of the working and particularly the middle class. Such perceptions helped develop a discourse that demanded lesser government intervention (Baer, 2000).

Not to be overlooked, in the championing of Conservative discourse, was the growing significance in the 1970s of Political Action Committees (PACS). The Right wing PACS were noted for their considerable financial strength in funding Conservatives' single issue causes. Additionally, these PACS were also able to gather major financial contributions from the powerful corporate lobby. Compared to Left Wing PACS, the organisation and financial clout were overwhelming in its advantage and cohesiveness. This development was to set the course for the successful coalition that became known as the New Right (Abrahams, 2006; Davis, 1981; Ness, 2004).

## **Chapter Two: America Transformed: The Emergence of the New Social Movements**

### **The New Social Movement Paradigm**

The New Social Movement (NSM) paradigm is concerned with how contemporary social movements have emerged in what is thought to be a new post industrial era (Pichardo, 1997). According to Pichardo (1997), the NSM paradigm locates social movements as being influenced by cultural issues that are Leftist in orientation within a changing milieu of global economic structures. Furthermore, NSM theory places a significant emphasis on an individual's sense of identity within contemporary social movements (Pichardo, 1997). Dalton et al. (1990) note that NSM differs from past social movements, in that, class is eschewed as a rallying point for activism. Also quality of life issues as influenced by changes in economic structures have been given greater prominence. This conceptualisation, Dalton et al. (1990) contend, incorporates Inglehart's post-material thesis. It is postulated that the shift towards post-material values has seen society undergo a silent change in its value orientation towards placing a greater emphasis on quality of life issues. (Inglehart, 1997). Movements focused on quality of life issues can provide avenues for self-development and personal expression. Such has been arguably manifest through a range of movements such as the peace movements of the 1970s, on-going human rights movements and the many U.S. foreign policy specific movements from the 1970s to the present day (Adams, 2003; Epstein, 1990; Kauffman, 1995).

Modern society has created a vacuous community for the creation and development of self identity. Identity seeking behaviours, as Melucci espouses, are the consequence of postmodern conduct. Some of the key factors of post-modernisation and its impact on identity construction flow from the following socio-economic trends: material affluence that has led to economic security, an overpowering sense of dissonance as a result of information overload, a sense of displacement as a consequence of the availability of cultural outlets and a systemic impression that societal institutions and cultural outlets have become akin to a failed state in providing the human need for self identification (Laraña et al. 1994 p. 11; Inglehart 1997, p. 347). The issues that NSM groups advocate reflect the expanded horizons of personal choice and point out cracks in the system, often in the form of

newly defined global concerns. Individuals seek out new collectivities and produce “new social spaces” where novel life-styles and social identities can be experienced and defined. NSM research points out the need for system adjustments via movement formation and the cultural challenges that new movements pose (Habermas 1971, pp. 36-37).

## **Sequential Waves Of New Movements Emanated From The 1960s**

Various and sequential waves of new movements have changed the social and political life in Western democracies. Among those which emanated from the 1960s were public interest and citizen action groups, community action, neighbourhood and self-help groups, civil rights, anti-Vietnam War and student movements. They were followed in the 1970s and the early 1980s by women's, regional, environmental, anti-nuclear power, and peace movements, to name but a few (Brand, 1990; Epstein, 1990; Smith, 1996). The over-riding world view of the New Left and its protégé, the New Social Movements, was that it articulated themes that echoed post-structuralist critiques of power structures that steered away from the idea that the working-class was the sole agency of political and social change (Brand, 1990; Epstein, 1990).

Both the Old and New Left are bound by emancipatory vision (Diggins, 1973). The Old Left, influenced by Marxian doctrines, focused its attention on social change through the agency of the working class with resonant themes of solidarity through shared experiences of economic disparities diagnosed as being born out of the contradictions within the free market economic system (Alway, 1995; Diggins, 1973; Weitz, 2001). Alway (1995) summarises their view related to the foretold mission of the working class:

For Marx, however, the self-knowledge necessary to bring about, consciously, the actualization of history's meaning is itself a historical accomplishment realized only in the self-conscious activity of a particular social group under particular historical circumstances. The agent whose historical mission is the actualization of history's meaning is the proletariat. It is the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat that will bring about the realization of a better world (Alway, 1995, p. 11).

## **The Rise of New Centres of Power**

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 signalled a culmination of the Conservative backlash. One could trace its roots back to the failed Goldwater Campaign of 1964. Nixon's loathing of the anti-war movement and growing dissent amongst a new breed of Republicans echoed themes such as decentralisation, anti-government, quality of opportunity through the free market, libertarian aspects such as 'the government is the problem', the salience of libertarian rhetoric to many publics and the rise of evangelical Christians who aligned themselves to the New Right through what amounted to political gymnastics – as they came to terms and made peace with the powerful corporate interest wing of the Republican Party (Abrahams, 2006; Baer, 2000; Ness, 2004). Economic factors also contributed to the shift to the Right in the U.S. polity. The mid-1970s saw a steadily increasing pattern emerging of economic liberalism in the Western world in which massive amounts of capital were seeking trans-national havens to invest and speculate in. This was a direct challenge to the established Keynesian orthodoxy. Popular support for deregulation and the establishment of neo-liberal orthodoxy grew amongst elites as well as being fashioned into succinct market populist sound bites for public consumption. In the United States, new centres of wealth creation had emerged due to demographic, social, and cultural changes (Davis, 1981).

The New Conservatism had particular resonance aided also by the economic emergence of regional areas such as financial centres, military-industrial centres of power and developing areas of what were to become known as hubs of the new knowledge economy (Davis, 1981). These areas included, for example, the South, the Sun-Belt and the Mountain States. Areas such as Los Angeles, Houston and Denver also emerged as cities that carried real financial clout and were steadily attracting large financial institutions to migrate westwards (Davis, 1981). Part of the attraction of this development was the weak unionisation of these emerging regions. This is in direct contrast to the comparatively strongly region of the unionised north-east (Davies, 1989).

It is interesting to observe however, that just as the New Left critiqued Reformed Liberalism in its various expressions so did the critique of Reformed Liberalism continue with the rise of the New American Right (Abrahams, 2006; Ness, 2004).

## Integrated Global Markets

For the last several decades, Neoliberalism has become so embedded in academia, economic orthodoxy and worldwide institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, that it is considered to have obtained what one would term a *hegemonic dominance*. Moreover, there is considered to be no other alternative (Angelis, 2000; Steger, 2003).

Neoliberal concepts evoke laissez-faire principles that predate the Great Depression and emphasise liberal concepts of individuality and self-interest in the fulfilment of personal ambition (Wade, 2008). Nowadays, such philosophical precepts have been fashioned so that nations' markets have become integrated into a worldwide network of free trade groupings such as the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Additionally, the widespread diffusion of technology and the free flow of capital have assisted the emergence of powerful multi-nation companies with supporting influential international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) supporting these multinational organisations' quest for new and lucrative markets (Steger, 2003). The consequence of such liberation has seen the substantial free flow of speculative capital (Steger, 2003). The deregulation of financial markets was particularly evidenced in the United States and the United Kingdom, which encouraged the "shadow banking system" (Wade, 2008). In other words, hedge funds, commodity and currency price speculations were allowed to flow almost unrestrictedly in and out of particular markets. Neoliberal globalisation did not arrive in a predestined manner (Wade, 2008). In the global sense, liberalisation of market forces came through the belief of Adam Smith's view of societal cohesiveness through the free market (Angelis, 2000; Gaffaney, 1999). Such philosophies were ultimately thought to bring about "a better world" through the rational maximisation of non-coercive individualism which sought to bring about the greater good through economic prosperity (Adams, 2003; Angelis, 2000; Gaffaney, 1999). Steger (2002), noting the assertions of the Chicago School of Economics, states that neoliberal globalists strongly assert the spread of democracy because economic power and political power become separated (p. 48). Liberty is believed to take root in a society which follows neoliberal prescriptions in that the free flow of capital plays an instrumental role in actively promoting individual potential and creativity (Steger, 2002. p. 48). A caveat must be

sounded as evidenced by regimes that operate in countries such as China, who do not fit the generic category of a 'liberal democracy'. Furthermore, countries like China are currently experiencing significant economic growth, directed from a powerful political centre. It is popular amongst neoliberal proponents that a better society is one in which governmental authority remains a non-coercive background entity. The desired goal is that the market triumphs over centralised governmental planning, leaving the state to become an arbiter or legislative authority protecting property rights and contractual agreements (Steger, 2002. p. 48).

With respect to the American Left, the project of Neoliberalism with its hegemonic influence and cultural resonance as outlined has had a profoundly individualising effect on American society. The transient nature of global capital as well as flexible labour markets has seen many communities lose their cohesion through transient outflow of people and also loss of industry. In this confluence, the American Left has struggled to cohesively provide a counter-narrative to bring people together to oppose these changes in a concrete manner. Instead the American Left has been a plethora of single-issue movements that as Alexander Cockburn (2007) has noted, come together to protest American foreign policy when a conflict arises. The case studies that have been compiled point towards this observation. The protest against U.S. foreign policy despite the strong hegemonic presence of market populism (Frank, 2000) still manages to arise approximately 40 years later after the conclusion of the United States' involvement in Vietnam.

## **Neoliberal Theoretical Concepts**

The most prominent facet of the New Right is Neoliberalism. Essentially it is the re-emergence of 19th Century laissez-faire economics. A noteworthy feature of Neoliberalism, as it attained significance in the 1970s, was its influence over the economic doctrines of Conservative Parties, rather than their Liberal counterparts. This co-optation of conservatism would have been considered unthinkable in the 19th Century. Laissez-faire economics from Edmund Burke's perspective would have been viewed strongly as tearing away at the fabric of social cohesion and tradition (Adams, 2003). Moreover, Burkean philosophy, in expression of European conservatism, was strongly communitarian.

Neoliberalism actively promotes *privatism* in all of its forms. *Collectivism*, on the one hand, can be described as a polar opposite (Gaffaney, 1999). Many scholars have suggested that the 1960s introduced an enhancement of individualistic atomisation in which its themes profoundly revolutionised the United States (Gross, 1986; Lieberman, 2004).

While claiming to draw on a long tradition of liberal thought from Adam Smith and John Locke to Herbert Spencer (Adams, 2003), neoliberal theorists explicitly rely on a negative conception of liberty, in Berlin's term (Berlin, 1958), that is non-coercive and non-interfering (Adams, 2003). Neoliberal theoreticians enacted a powerful set of economic doctrines and social philosophy that was to become hegemonic not only in the United States but to varying degrees right throughout the Western World. Recoiling from the oil shocks of the early 1970s, including stagflation and rising levels of unemployment, Keynesian welfarism was perceived as not being able to deliver continued economic prosperity. This created a situation in the United States of an economic, political, and philosophical vacuum. A paradigm shift was to occur. This shift was to leave progressive liberalism searching for a counter-hegemonic project (Nielson, 1996).

Neoliberalism was highly influenced by the writings of former London School of Economics Professor Fredrick von Hayek (1944) and Chicago School of Economics Professor Milton Freedman, who drew upon Berlin's (1958) concept of negative versus positive freedom (Steger, 2002. p. 48). In summary, neoliberal theoreticians asserted that true liberty lay in the full societal adoption of Berlin's concept of negative freedom. The paradigm shift to Neoliberalism had widespread implications. Citizenship became redefined in terms of full participation in the market. The goal of every American citizen, in the paradigm, was conceived as freedom from government coercion (Hayek, 2007). This obviously included state-run programmes providing any sort of social assistance in the form of welfare, affirmative action and any other forms of redistribution by the Federal government. Such ideas were effectively communicated by the candidacy of Ronald Reagan in 1976 and became hegemonic in American social and political discourses on his successful bid for the presidency in 1980 (Davis, 1981; Ness, 2004; Steger, 2003).

Neoliberal concepts of citizenship provided a meaningful discourse of adopting, both philosophically and figuratively, the American Western tradition of



rugged individualism (Davis, 1981, para. 15). Citizens participating in this discourse would wholeheartedly extract themselves from any form of state interference. Any interference in such a climate would be met with an unfavourable response from senators or House representatives on any personal issue facing the citizenry. The Democratic Party, far from providing a counter-weight, shifted to the right as well. This was evidenced by President Jimmy Carter's anti-union stance towards the end of his presidency (Brenner, 2004; Davis, 1981; Ness, 2004). In respect of the neoliberal conception of citizenship, citizens' rights would be seen to be severely violated by any interference or intrusion into the private sphere (Gaffaney, 1998). According to neoliberal thinkers, citizens' rights are fully operational when citizens are involved in the marketplace and are wage or salary earners. Furthermore, neoliberal key policies were to enact tax cuts wherever possible. In keeping with the doctrine of negative freedom, progressive taxation would only act as a means of state coercion, thus endangering citizens' rights to liberty (Berlin, 1958; Gaffaney, 1999). In addition, market liberalisation would allow individuals through the practice of negative freedom to accomplish their accumulative goals independently of the state.

Friedrich Hayek's critique of Keynesianism and welfarism emerged from his critique of mixed economic planning. In short, Hayek believes that any attempt at partial planning will ultimately lead to the adoption of arbitrary full state controlled planning. He asserts that this imposes a subjective set of values and allocation of economic resources. Thus limiting the potential of individuals to utilise market mechanisms which he contends are neither arbitrary nor coercive (Keizer, 1994, p. 218).

Hayek believed that the discussion of conceptual ideas has made historical accomplishments achievable. An individual is limited to being proficient in a finite and specific assortment of data (Gaffaney, 1999; Keizer, 1994, pp. 215-216). Hayek's view of the market is one that takes into account individual proficiency in a mechanistic way. Tacit knowledge is thus able to be utilised. For example, market mechanisms such as prices are seen as invaluable conduits that provide information connecting people in a conceptual mode (Gaffaney, 1999, para. 5). Hayek's conception of the market and abstract ideas of tacit knowledge theoretically permits individuals to solicit a perspective about the systemic whole from a partial but

perhaps growing understanding of the whole (Gaffaney, 1999, para. 5; Keizer, 1994, pp. 214-215).

This abstraction of tacit knowledge is about order. Hayek, one of the doyens of Neoliberalism, believed the market is the only vehicle that can bring together such diffused knowledge (Gaffaney, 1999; Steger, 2002). However, the market order accordingly can facilitate an integrated unified order. Therefore, the market facilitates a wide range of social mores ultimately serving the desired goal of a set of processes that drive technological progression and societal cohesion (Keizer, 1994, pp. 214-215).

## **Reagan's Foreign Policy Towards Central America**

In 1979, a political revolution occurred in Nicaragua. The Anastasio Somoza (1925-1980) government which had assumed dictatorial powers was overthrown by the populist *Frente Sandinista de Liberación* (FSLN, or Sandinista National Liberation Front) (Soares and Cummins, 2000). The Somoza family, with U.S. backing, ruled Nicaragua in a repressive and dictatorial fashion from 1933 to 1979. One of the hallmarks of the Somoza regime was the way in which it was garnished with foreign aid, primarily from the U.S., which provided the regime with economic aid, armaments and covert military advices (Lafeber, 1994; Soares and Cummins, 2000). A primary outcome was that Nicaragua's power elite became dependent and profited from such aid, which meant that it was then able to dominate completely Nicaragua's social, economic and political life. However, the Somoza regime may have been seen to have firm political and social control over its citizenry, its power was more tenuous than its intelligence services or its foreign donors cared to think (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). In short, Nicaragua, like other Central American nations such as El Salvador and Honduras, were explosive dynamics in their social and political structure that were bound to create ferment for attempted political revolution.

A summary of multi-causal factors reveals the institutional, social and political cracks which would surface in the late 1970s and into the 1980s (Lafeber, 1994; Nepstad and Smith, 2001). Firstly, a deep discontent was felt in the Central American region. This had its antecedents in severe squalor, unequal income

distribution as well as the disproportionate ownership of land by those in the wealthier classes.

Secondly, elites ruthlessly repressed individual and group protests (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). Such violence inevitably breeds deep seated feelings of hatred, discontentment and an overwhelming sense of injustice. What was lacking however, for the voices of the discontented, was a vehicle in which to vent built up generational feelings of rage (Nepstad and Smith, 2001).

Thirdly, the process of industrialisation and its modernising characteristics created a destabilising effect on family, kinship, village and traditional social ties (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). The modernising processes saw the introduction of a market economy with its individualising effects. This is evidenced in Central America by the breakdown of social controls such as the hacienda system<sup>19</sup>. The relationship between landlords and labourers became that of an employer-employee arrangement (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). This created a disorientating individualising effect as individuals sought employment in growing urban centres. This also helped create the spread of dissident groups (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). These groups were able to provide an outlet for generational hatred and mistrust of repressive power elites. Strong emotional reactions to repression and injustice are not enough by themselves to facilitate change (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). Such ferment needs a structure and an organisation with a sense of solidarity that is well organised. A dissident group can provide this. In the case of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala such organisations were quickly established and provided structure for an outlet for deep seated resentments (Nepstad and Smith, 2001).

The sense of grievance, it must be noted, also transcended the ruling elites of the 1960s and 1970s (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). In sum, such a long history of subjugation and repression provided one of the essential ingredients for violent political ferment. The growth of dissident groups as mentioned produced a replicating cycle of protest and then repression in a sense serving to radicalise the growing dissident movements as well as providing a sense of a siege mentality by the ruling elites (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). It had its roots in the Spanish Conquest

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<sup>19</sup> Hacienda is a term that came from the colonial period. It means a state or huge land holding in Latin America. This system lasted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The haciendas estate holders dominated rural life, influencing socio-economic ties. The owners of the haciendas often wielded great influence in power, and could keep a labourer through the powers of local government continuously indebted to him. Therefore, the labourer could not become easily free of the hacienda in which he worked upon. The hacienda system was known for its subjugation of the indigenous Indian population. The system did not start breaking down until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of free market modernisation (Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 1994-2008).

of Central America. Before the arrival of the Spanish, the people of this region enjoyed well-developed and stable societies utilising the resources and wealth from the land to lead lives largely unaffected by want and poverty (Nepstad and Smith, 2001).

The poverty rates in Central American countries of Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador were startling (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). By the early 1980s rural poverty levels reached 60%. Malnutrition was evident in everyday life as rural unemployment rates in Nicaragua's case approximated 24% (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). The rural landscape illustrated the stark inequalities between the rural elites and the rural poor.

The United States advisers had sought to refashion Nicaragua's political, economic and social institutions (Smith, 1996). However, these reforms had the detrimental effect of precipitating unforeseen consequences. Institutions fashioned in the image of U.S. equivalence such as trade unions, farmers' cooperatives and a more liberalised free market system created a deep sense of profound individualising effects (Smith, 1996). In short, these developments further uprooted the vast majority of Nicaraguans' sense of social, family and traditional ties. This created an impression of displacement and an insecurity which opened up a political and social vacuum (Smith, 1996).

The United States was a particularly prominent donor in propping up the Somoza regime. President Jimmy Carter's (1977 to 1980) foreign policy was based on furthering human rights throughout the United States' sphere of influence. This was to serve as a foundation for Carter's foreign policy. Carter unsuccessfully attempted to reform the Somoza regime's continual violation of human rights, despite a large aid package of \$75 million (Soares and Cummins, 2000). Carter initially also supported dialogue with the Sandinista movement. However, the Pentagon and the CIA remained wary of potential Sandinista involvement in aiding and embedding El Salvadoran revolutionaries (Soares and Cummins, 2000). Carter, unlike his successor, Reagan, viewed the ferment in Latin America as a North-South issue (Lafeber, 1994). This took into account many causal factors which precipitated feelings of discontent and individual dislocation. However, Ronald Reagan who defeated Carter in the 1980 presidential election strictly viewed events in Central America in Cold War terms (Lafeber, 1994). Central America under Reagan's

administration was to become a battle ground between the western hemisphere and the Soviet bloc. Reagan regarded Nicaragua as a staging point for Soviet-Cuban inspired communist revolutions that potentially radicalised this region with its close proximity to the American homeland (Lafeber, 1994).

The FSLN (Sandinistas) created in 1961 as a rebel group had the ultimate aim of overthrowing the Somoza regime (Soares and Cummins, 2000). The FSLN was held in check for a decade. As the Somoza regime allied with support from the United States, it was able to crack down on dissident revolutionary forces. The Nicaraguan National Guard was able to hold FSLN and other anti-Somozan groups in check (Soares and Cummins, 2000). The National Guard owed much of its effectiveness to its United States trainees as well as being well equipped and resourced to carry out anti-government crackdowns.

In 1972, a powerful earthquake caused a national crisis as it severely damaged Nicaragua's capital Managua (Soares and Cummins, 2000). The resulting carnage of such a large scale earthquake annihilated over six thousand people and left over three hundred thousand destitute and homeless. This event prompted a flood of international aid to relieve the suffering of the Nicaraguans (Soares and Cummins, 2000).

Somoza successfully placed himself in charge of the relief effort, comprising of collection and distribution of international aid (Soares and Cummins, 2000). Somoza did not endear himself to the Nicaraguans or the world, when it was revealed soon after the catastrophe that he misappropriated international aid money (Soares and Cummins, 2000). Somoza stole funds despite the increase in famine and resultant mortality rates, diseases and general societal dislocation afflicting his people. Consequently, anti-government sentiment spread due to Somoza's actions, as Nicaraguans sought a new beginning from years of repression (Soares and Cummins, 2000).

The FSLN (Sandinistas) under the leadership of Daniel Ortega Saavedra was able to gain new recruits and increase populist support for a revolution (Soares and Cummins, 2000). From their inception in 1961, the FSLN was able, despite some setbacks, to capture increasingly larger proportions of the Nicaraguan countryside. This strategy gained increasing impetus as a result of the Managua earthquake and Somoza's resulting inaction (Soares and Cummins, 2000). The

Sandinista resistance were able to consolidate their political power and they successfully entered Managua on 19 July 1979 (Soares and Cummins, 2000). They were able to dispose quickly the Somozan government and install a new reformed government with institutions to carry out reforms. Although the Nicaraguan economy remained up to 60 percent in the hands of free enterprise, the Sandinista government nationalised the banks and conducted land reforms from Somoza's considerable holdings (Lafeber, 1994). Anastasio Somoza, after being evicted from power, immediately fled Nicaragua to seek refuge in Paraguay. However, he was soon assassinated in September 1980 (Soares and Cummins, 2000).

The inauguration of Ronald Reagan as President in January 1981 signalled a change of policy towards Nicaragua's new Sandinista government (Smith, 1996). Reagan was hawkish on foreign policy especially when it concerned Third World revolutionary movements and communism (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996). Reagan viewed such movements as being one and the same. The case of Nicaragua, in which the Sandinistas did profess a Leftist ideology, particularly vexed Reagan (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996).

Several contributing factors drove his distaste of the Sandinista revolutionaries (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996). Firstly, he was concerned that the Sandinista revolutionaries would provide aid to Leftist forces in Nicaragua's civil war. Secondly, the early 1980s was a time when Reagan declared his intentions to heighten the Cold War through increased military expenditure and support for governments who oppose communist incursions (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996).

The Soviet Union was denounced as 'the evil empire' (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996). Reagan viewed the Soviet Union as the cause for all the troubled spots in the world. Furthermore, he saw it as a soulless and godless empire (Lafeber, 1994). This empire had to be rolled back as it was a totalitarian regime that curtailed individual freedom and democracy. Reagan, although not lacking domestic criticism in some quarters, rhetorically appealed to a vast number of the American public (Lafeber, 1994). Reagan was able to galvanise a large proportion of the American population who agreed with his universalism and his belief in American exceptionalism.

Reagan swept aside Nixon-Ford's foreign policy of *de tente* and Carter's foreign policy that centred around human rights (Brands, 2001). Carter's foreign

policy also continued the de-escalation of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Under the Reagan administration, U.S. foreign policy went much further than Cold War liberalism espoused (Brands, 2001). It reversed the Truman Doctrine of Containment to a positive rolling back of the Communist Bloc (Lafeber, 1994). This change in thinking also signalled a much more aggressive posture and gestured to all communist regimes that America was not prepared to retreat. Dr. Kenton Bird of the CCA comments on the covert nature of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy. Bird's comments encapsulate a widespread belief held by many anti-war protestors towards the administration:

I don't think Reagan was ever held accountable, even when [5] years later when the Iran contra scandal erupted and the evidence accumulated that there were significant contacts in 1979 and the early 1980s between Reagan's aides and the representatives of the Iranian government ... before he was elected. (K. Bird, interview, January 21, 2010)

Reagan's aggressive stance towards revolutionary movements in El Salvador, Nicaragua and the use of the CIA under the directorship of William Casey, was more than prepared to follow administration urgings to keep all CIA involvement covert, ushered an era in which Central America was to experience unprecedented upheaval in loss of life (Lafeber, 1994). The prospect of having communist inspired revolutions in Central America was not a prospect Reagan was willing to entertain. His administration, as witnessed by the Iran Contra scandal, clearly indicated his intent to stop revolutionary movements seemingly at all costs (Lafeber, 1994). Lafeber (1994) suggests that Reagan was obsessed with toppling the Sandinista regime and what particularly angered Reagan was the economic, military and medical assistance Nicaragua was receiving from Cuba, the Soviet Union and Eastern European satellites although it must be stated that Canada, Japan, and parts of Western Europe also gave Nicaragua economic assistance. It appears at this stage they did not see the situation as a battle between East versus West (Lafeber, 1994).

Reagan was not slow in putting pressure on the new Sandinista government. He quickly suspended all economic aid to Nicaragua (Smith, 1996). This action signalled a departure from the Carter Administration's attempt to reform and economically transform Nicaragua. Reagan and the CIA, allied with the Pentagon,

were totally convinced that the FSLN was aiding an attempted Leftist revolutionary coup in El Salvador (Smith, 1996). From 1983-1984, Reagan suspended all trading relations between the United States and Nicaragua. The Sandinista regime was to be undermined through the withdrawal of economic assistance and the earning of foreign currency through trade (Smith, 1996). Not only did the new Sandinista government face external pressures, but internal threats as well. The toppling of the Somoza regime did not fully eliminate Somoza's military under the former National Guard (Smith, 1996).

The once-powerful Somozan National Guard reformed and reorganised itself to target the Sandinistas in what was to become a civil war (Smith, 1996). The members of the former National Guard were known as Somocistas. The Somocistas were joined by an English-speaking Miskito tribe, who felt disenfranchised by the Sandinista government and their efforts to assimilate them more into the Nicaraguan community (Smith, 1996). In 1981, they allied themselves with the Somocistas. This group became known as the Contras. The Contras operated out of the neighbouring state of Honduras using guerrilla warfare tactics that targeted important Nicaraguan installations and military targets (Smith, 1996). In 1981, Reagan signed a secret order, with the CIA's knowledge and backing, authorising the agency to spend \$19 million to train and to guide the Contras (Lafeber, 1994). Part of this training occurred on the American homeland in Florida. This was a covert military training exercise which had the irony of the United States training a guerrilla army to fight against the Nicaraguan government to which the United States, along with the international community, had given international recognition (Lafeber, 1994).

With a costly and disruptive war raging in Nicaraguan rural areas, the United States paramilitary operations were stepped up as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Council (NSC) devised new and devastating strategies to bring about the downfall of the Sandinistan government. Nationally renowned journalist, Bob Woodward, in his book *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987*, recorded William Casey, Director of the CIA, demanding "Let's make them sweat. Let's make the bastards sweat." This form of rhetoric also possessed a practical application which was to dismantle and inhibit the governance of the Sandinistan administration.



Reagan saw an opportunity to train and aid the Contra movement towards a successful counterrevolution (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996). A significant amount of aid and training was given to the Contras to strengthen their firepower and strategic awareness. The CIA demonstrated to its trainees its covert fighting and strategic awareness in late 1983 by mining key Nicaraguan harbours, as well as striking key installations such as oil and airport amenities (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996). Congress was so angered by the CIA's unauthorised operations that in 1984, it voted successfully to suspend all economic, military and training to the Contras (Lafeber, 1994; Smith, 1996). Reagan was however not to be deterred from overthrowing the Sandinista regime (Lafeber, 1994). He canvassed his base of support, calling for private donations and diverted CIA funds towards bringing about a counter-revolution in Nicaragua (Lafeber, 1994). Reagan famously likened the Contras to the founding fathers of the United States. The war would continue with or without congress (Lafeber, 1994).

Nicaragua held free elections in 1984 under international supervision in which the Sandinistas won (Smith, 1996). Many in the international diplomatic community regarded the result as reflecting the will of the Nicaraguan people, as they asserted that the elections were free and fair (Lafeber, 1994). With the victory of the Sandinistas in the 1984 election, all seemed lost for the Reaganites. Heading into 1986, it did not seem that any policy would work (Lafeber, 1994). President Reagan felt like both hands were tied behind his back by Congressional ban on aid to the Contras. In 1986, he was determined to unshackle his Central American policy by lobbying hard (Lafeber, 1994). Reagan tried to influence key opinion leaders in congress, seeking their support to reinstate Contra aid. His powers of persuasion as the president proved unstoppable as congress voted to reinstate aid to the Contras (Lafeber, 1994). Reagan's determination to overthrow the Sandinista government was revived.

The U.S. economic boycott of Nicaragua caused the Nicaraguan people great distress and hardship as they battled on with their everyday lives (Lafeber, 1994). The Sandinista army, by the mid-1980s was battle hardened, experienced and proficient in repelling Contra attacks. Nonetheless, despite U.S. training and equipment, the Contras never looked as if they could be likely victors in this conflict (Lafeber, 1994). In 1987, the Contras lost approximately 400 people in combat each

day to the Sandinista military. In 1988, the Contras and the Sandinistas ceased hostilities to embark upon peace negotiations, inspired by the 1987 Nobel Prize winner, President Oscar Arias Sanchez of Costa Rica (Lafeber, 1994). President Arias proposed a regional peace plan to end the most violent and destructive period in 350 years. For example, 40,000 Nicaraguans died from 1981 to 1987, as a result of the Contra's attempted counterrevolution (Lafeber, 1994). The Contras, realising that the Sandinistas were not likely to be defeated, saw reason for peaceful negotiation. Both sides agreed on a free and open election to be held in 1990 (Lafeber, 1994).

It is fair to say that Reagan was never in favour of Arias' inspired peace talks (Lafeber, 1994). He still feared the Soviet threat despite the fact that by the late 1980s, the Soviet Union was signalling a new posture towards the west under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev (Abrahams, 2006). The new Soviet relationship with the U.S. helped to deescalate Cold War tensions, with the distinct prospect of ending the Cold War altogether. Moreover, the Soviets were mired in their own equivalent of Vietnam which was the unsuccessful invasion of Afghanistan in 1980 (Abrahams, 2006). Soviet troops eventually had to withdraw in 1989. Reagan's attentions were diverted away from Central America with impending political scandals at home, known as the Iran-Contra affair (Abrahams, 2006; Smith, 1996). Free elections were held in Nicaragua on 25 February 1990. The Sandinista government was defeated by the National Opposition Union, headed by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (Smith, 1996). The process of handing over power was peaceful. U.S. sanctions on Nicaragua were immediately lifted by President George H. W. Bush.

In conclusion, the conflict in Nicaragua and El Salvador imposed the far-reaching destruction of lives, society and economic welfare in Central America that had been unprecedented in 350 years. Approximately 40,000 Nicaraguans lost their lives during the Sandinista-Contra war. In the eyes of the world, America's foreign policy towards this region was seen as untenable and it was a throwback to binary Cold War thinking. Perhaps Jimmy Carter encapsulated the problems of Central America best when he suggested the problems confronting Central America revolved around a North-South divide. Carter in a nuanced way took into consideration the fact that Central America was experiencing the upheavals and dislocation that

naturally occur with industrialisation. Obviously this is not mutually exclusive as a causal factor. However, it explains much of the growing inequality and the breakdown of tradition and social ties in a more analytical approach than these factors being influenced simply by the Soviet Union and its accompanying ideology.

Perhaps with the benefit of hindsight, such Reaganite evaluations are now acknowledged by many as imprudent. Many in the international community were not alone in condemning Reagan's Central American intervention. Many in the United States opposed Reagan's involvement in this region. Resisting Reagan's Central American policies became the biggest oppositional peace movement the United States had experienced since the Vietnam War (Cockburn, 2007). Despite the protest movement directed against the U.S.'s involvement in the recent regime changes in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Protest movement against Reagan's foreign policy in the 1980s still remains the largest protest movement against U.S. government actions since the Vietnam War. It was a movement that had an evanescent quality to it unlike its contemporary equivalence such as opposition to the Iraq war, free trade and anti-globalisation movements (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). The opposition to resisting Reagan and Central America with its evanescent qualities seemed to gather and build upon its own momentum. Reagan's Central American foreign policy was the most unpopular aspect to his foreign agenda. Many Americans were perplexed if not bemused by Reagan's doggedness to intervene in this part of the world were further agitated when in 1988, the Iran-Contra affair broke (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). This scandal directly threatened the Reagan Administration. Reagan pronounced emphatically he had no knowledge of such an illegal covert operation. However, he soon had to retract such pronouncements as evidence emerged to the contrary (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). Throughout the 1980s, tens of thousands of North Americans were driven to humanitarian and political action on behalf of José Valdes and millions of others like him suffering the horrors of a U.S. sponsored war in Central America. Together these North Americans became the U.S. Central America peace movement (Nepstad and Smith, 2001).

The Reagan Administration's foreign policy towards Central America galvanised an activist ferment on the American Left that called into question the nature of the executive's branch of government's wide ranging powers to conduct

foreign policy. The Reagan administration's proxy war in Central America was viewed as been corrosive to American democracy<sup>20</sup> (Cockburn<sup>21</sup>, 2007). Many Americans were outraged at the United States proxy backing of the Contras in Nicaragua as well as other right wing inspired militant action in Honduras and Guatemala. Nepstad and Smith (2001) note a number of authors who outline the nature of the anti-war movement's opposition to Reagan's Central American involvement: "...illegally harbouring Central American refugees within the United States" (Crittenden 1988; Lorentzen 1991), and mass campaigns of civil disobedience (Hannon 1991; Smith 1996); "These actions had the potential to incur prison sentences, injury, even death" (Nepstad and Smith, 2001, p.160).

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<sup>20</sup> Nepstad and Smith (1999) note in general terms the ambivalence that most Americans had towards Central America and their understanding of the socio-political tensions that existed there. It was the Reagan Administration and the peace movement that were able to bring the conflict in this region into the consciousness of the American public. Media coverage successfully disseminated Reagan's proxy war in Central America as being part of the Cold War narrative. "The wars of Central America were being waged thousands of miles from the United States. And, during the height of the Cold War, national attention was focused on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Thus, most Americans knew little about Central America prior to the 1980s" (Nepstad and Smith, 1999 p.11).

<sup>21</sup> Political Journalist Alexander Cockburn (2007) denotes the nature of anti-war dissent to U.S. foreign policy throughout the last four decades: "And when a war comes along, as it does with great regularity in America, they generally coalesce into an anti-war movement. They certainly did in the late 1980s" (para. 8).

## **Chapter Three: Rage against Reagan: Protesting U.S. Intervention in Central America**

### **History of the Coalition for Central America**

The Coalition for Central America (CCA) was established in 1986 and ran until 1996. The CCA had a discourse that, on reflection, resonates with themes of the contemporary American Left in terms of social justice and an anti-interventionist posture towards U.S. foreign policy. Furthermore, it underscores arguments made by Ralph Miliband (1994) in his *New Left Review* article, *The Plausibility of Socialism*. This is not to say that the CCA was a socialist movement, but the themes in Miliband's treatise is that socialism, in its essence, is a movement in democratising and reforming structures run by elites geared towards meeting their economic and social interest. Members interviewed from the CCA expressed a desire to have a greater influence, as citizens, over the political apparatus of the state. The CCA also sought institutional reform in regards to U.S. foreign policy, which at the time, was embedded in a neo-conservative Cold War narrative. Miliband (1994) argues that socialism is part of a desperate struggle to enlarge the reach of democracy in all spheres of public life. In this sense, social movements embrace a class dichotomy in part because pressure for social change is channelled through those who challenge the power elite. They make up a minority of the population (Miliband, 1994; Mills, 1956). In relation to this description of Miliband's treatise, the CCA was one that did not seek a radical transformation of existing power structures, but rather was oriented to working within the existing liberal democratic structures. The CCA did operate from a bottom-up, non-hierarchical predisposition. This predisposition, however, did not challenge the existing nature of U.S. Capitalism, but rather, in a general sense, was critical of the relationship between state power and corporate power in what was termed in the late 1950s as the 'military industrial complex'. It can be argued from a proletarian or neo-proletarian perspective that movements that challenge some aspects of the organising principle of society, which is based on neo-liberal laissez-faire doctrine, embrace the socialist tenet of co-operation and solidarity in the search for the creation of a more equitable society (Miliband, 1994). The CCA in challenging the military industrial complex and associated profit motive, did resonate a remnant of a socialistic spirit as laid out by Ralph Miliband and other

writers of the Left. However, a caution must be sounded here for that in examining the interviews and the CCA archives, the themes were more aligned with NSM discourse and a post-materialist, postmodern world view, which by nature operate in a fragmented individualistic manner within the liberal democratic project.

On close examination, while the CCA echoed with cultural Leftist themes considered by many to be representative of a cultural Left; they were tepid in espousing essentialist socialistic themes. Such themes as laid out by Engels and Marx related to class struggles, exploitation and the economic contradictions inherent in the free market. The CCA was not part of a wider social movement that put forth a socio-political analysis of the working class' situation, nor did they express a need for greater collectivism in order to progressively challenge the existing political system in all structural aspects according to classic socialistic doctrines (Adams, 2003; Engels and Marx, 1967; Miliband, 1994; Newman, 2005).

The CCA espoused themes that were broadly resonated in the New Social Movements. Characteristically, the CCA was anti-authoritarian vis-à-vis U.S. foreign policy, and did not seek a radical overture to replace existing institutions of foreign policy statecraft, but rather sought, along with the wider anti-war movement, a state apparatus which was more accountable and willing to be fashioned in a manner befitting a more direct democratic system. Furthermore, the CCA was imbued with a desire for a more open and transparent democratic society. This was encapsulated by many interviews which highlighted a desire for a more participatory democracy. Many in the CCA echoed an activist ferment carried by the wider anti-war movement which was morally outraged by the Reagan Administration's proxy war in Central America. Laird Hastay, a member of the CCA, comments: "I joined because there was a chance to join forces with other local people who were revolted by American foreign policy in Central America and thereby affect that policy" (L. Hastay, interview, August 8, 2009). Hastay further contends, "Various administrations since World War II have ignored the Nuremberg Principles and the United States Constitution as they have waged unnecessary, illegal, and immoral wars against the poor of the world" (L. Hastay, interview, 8 2009).

Tom Lamar, a CCA member since its inception, describes the U.S. Foreign policy towards Central America as lacking wisdom, as well as moral fibre:

There was a lot of people who were upset about how nuns and priests were being treated in Latin America, and there was

a lot of motivation from lots of different kinds of people who came together to be the Coalition for Central America. We had a stupid foreign policy. It was just ridiculous and it would be so completely obvious to all these people in the region that we needed to do something to correct how our government was treating people. (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010)

Many activists in the Moscow-Pullman area felt moved to participate in the CCA as they felt a local response was necessary to acknowledge and protest what was happening in Central America. The CCA gave local activists a vehicle to express their opposition to the Administration. Dennis West articulates in a succinct way the basic motivation of what inspired many CCA members:

Well, I opposed the Reagan Bush [administration] and their policies in Central America at that time; and the Coalition for Central America seemed [to be] at a local, regional, and even national level. It seemed to be a good thing to join to try to make a difference, opposing the Reagan Bush [administration], [and] their policies in Central America. (D. West, interview, August 6, 2009)

## **Working within the Liberal Democratic system**

The CCA was emblematic of many NSM groups in that they had a flat non-hierarchical structure that emphasised consensus-based decision making and egalitarian values. It is important to note that, in broad terms, the NSMs often promoted single issues described as 'Identity Politics' (Adams, 2003; Kauffman, 1995), which in respect to the CCA and the anti-war effort, emphasised the pervasive nature of the power elites and the formation and execution of U.S. foreign policy.

The CCA was a localised association of groups who were opposed to the United States' intervention in Central America. The anti-war movement, which fought President Reagan's proxy war in Central America, was the largest protest group of its type in the United States since the Vietnam War (Cockburn, 2007; Smith, 1996). The anti-war movement first drew its moral fervour, in its genesis, from the Catholic Church and other mainline churches such as the Episcopalians and Methodists, as well as some support from Jewish Synagogues (Smith, 1996). The anti-war movement quickly expanded its base of support to those of a non-religious orientation and by the end of the anti-war movement 100,000 Americans had participated in resisting Reagan's proxy war (Smith, 1996). The movement sought to

challenge the dominant narratives the Reagan Administration disseminated regarding the nature of Central America's legitimacy in the administration's Cold War geopolitical struggle against the Soviet Union (Smith, 1996).

The CCA sprung from the amalgamation of approximately 60 individuals who came together out of a shared concern for the events occurring in Central America and the U.S. government's sponsorship of the Contra movement. These individuals belonged to several different groups from which the CCA was formed. These included: Moscow Central America Solidarity Organization (MCASO), Latin American Support Organization (LASO) at Washington State University, Witness for Peace affiliated with the Common Ministry at Washington State University, Moscow-Pullman Friends Meeting (Quakers), Social Justice Ministry of the Campus Christian Centre at the University of Idaho and Social Justice Ministry of St. Augustine's Catholic Church of Moscow (University of Idaho, 2004).

The original intention with which the CCA was formed, as Kenton Bird a founding member of the CCA states, was to "be more of a coordinating body, a steering committee, to keep track of what the individual groups were doing" (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). Another key founding member of the CCA, Carol Budi-Smith (political activist, nurse/administrator at Pullman Hospital)<sup>22</sup> returned inspired from a trip to Nicaragua, along with Kenton Bird. They held a public meeting/potluck dinner with people interested in supporting a non-interventionist U.S. foreign policy towards Central America while also stressing the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the region. They were inspired to raise public awareness and funding for humanitarian aid to support the people of Central America. Bird went on to write a series of articles in *The Idahoian Newspaper* expressing his impressions and experiences gained from his fact-finding mission to Nicaragua. Bird and Budi-Smith were the two key individuals who helped gather support for what turned out to be the formation of a coalition which featured several local Central American solidarity groups. The CCA is an important organisation to study in light of the hypothesis regarding the possible individualisation of the American Left because the CCA, as an activist group, projected several different elements. Firstly, the Coalition emanated from a sparsely populated conservative part of the United States, that being in the Pacific North-West. Both Eastern Washington and the Moscow area of North-West Idaho are

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<sup>22</sup> Carol Budi-Smith was involved in what was called "Tools for Peace"; she helped to collect farm equipment, seed and fertilizer to be shipped to farmers in Nicaragua, organized by Oxfam America, based in Boston (K. Bird interview, 21 January 2010).



hardly renowned as being hotbeds of Leftist radicalism. The findings from the interviews and archives situate the Coalition as part of a nationwide activist movement which disseminated an evanescent, tepid form of orthodox socialistic values, but more distinctly, it resembled the continuity of themes, values and world views of the NSM paradigm. This is important in that such values and personalism can permeate even the most remote epistemic conservatism through a vehicle, which in the American political space, is parked on the Left.

Soon after the CCA was formed it began to attract supporters who had no affiliation to the groups that had founded the Coalition. At its peak the CCA had 200 supporters within the Moscow-Pullman area and approximately 400 to 500 affiliates outside the region (CCA records University of Idaho 2009). A few members had been to Nicaragua and returned with a sense of moral outrage over what was happening in this conflict zone. They began their outreach activities in the Moscow-Pullman area in 1986, when the newly formed CCA was establishing itself (CCA records University of Idaho 2009). The CCA opened an office in downtown Moscow as well as opening a library and resource centre for the public which further increased civic awareness (CCA records University of Idaho 2009). Activities included the publication of a quarterly newsletter which was made readily available to the public. They also concentrated their communication strategy through the tactical use of film presentations, guest speakers and lecturers, letter-writing campaigns to politicians and other public officials as well as petition gathering (University of Idaho, 2004).

The CCA sought to raise the awareness of the public in Moscow and Pullman on Central American issues. They offered an alternative view that ran counter to the Reagan Administration's defence of the Contra movement. A feature of NSMs is that they resonate with an anti-authoritarian streak and a questioning of, in Millsian terms, 'the power elite'. This is not to say the members of the CCA nor the national anti-war movement would see themselves as anti-authoritarian, but instead championing grassroots liberal democratic values and advancing a desire for citizens to have a greater influence over political and foreign policy elites (Adams, 2003). These values were more liberal in nature than traditional Marxist Leftist critiques relating to class exploitation and alienation in both an economic and a humanistic sense (Adams, 2003; Miliband, 1994). The CCA would see their actions as holding the American

government accountable to 'American liberal democratic' values. The CCA particularly focused on events taking place in Nicaragua and disseminating information relating to the Contras' effort to topple the Sandinistan government. As time went on, the CCA sought to raise further awareness regarding other Latin American countries such as Mexico, as well as raising civic awareness on socio-political issues occurring in South America.

Weekly meetings were held in which "strategy, tactics, finances and direct actions were discussed" (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). Attendees also discussed the current political situation in the U.S. as far as congress' stance on Contra Aid and strategising how to influence key political figures (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). It is worth noting here that in relation to traditional socialist values, the CCA sought to work within a liberal political system rather than espousing socialist ideals which sought a 'sea change' in the political system and its organising principles as a whole (Adams, 2003; Miliband, 1994). The CCA placed great emphasis on two key areas: firstly, in lobbying potential congressional representatives to change their stance on Contra Aid and secondly to educate the Moscow-Pullman public on the nature of Reagan's proxy war. This was evinced by Carol Budi-Smith, one of the most influential members of the CCA, who was convinced that the Coalition could petition members of congress. The CCA sought to do this through phone calls, letter writing and petitions to the House of Representatives and in particular the speaker of the House, Tom Foley, a Democrat from the neighbouring 9<sup>th</sup> District of Washington (K. Bird, interview, January 21, 2010). Other CCA activities included:

Education that is, educating the public about what was going on in Central America, humanitarian aid, including things like the tools for peace... Pastors for peace and eventually the work that was done in the sister city association and then political action and lobbying, the political action included rallies and marches and protests (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009).

Moreover, the CCA quickly sought to fundraise from local communities to assist in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Central America. The money gathered supported various CCA activities including the Sister City project which focused on purchasing and delivering supplies of food, farm equipment, medical materials and educational resources for Nicaragua. CCA's communications strategy also had a national focus which was in sync with many localised anti-war organisations (Smith,

1996). The CCA ran full page newspaper advertisements in two of the most respected and widely-read nationwide papers. The selected newspapers were *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. The advertisements featured a list of names of those in opposition to Reagan's foreign policy posture towards Central America. Finally, Alexander Cockburn was a popular source of information for the CCA through his newspaper columns and other writings in magazines and journals (CCA Archives, 1986).

In the interviews conducted for this thesis, the members who visited the region recalled their experiences in travelling through Central America and particularly their memories of trips to Nicaragua (K. Bird, interview August 1 2009; P. Palmer, interview 16 August 2009; D. West, interview 6 August 2009). Many commented that they came back to the United States with a fervent desire to raise awareness through recounting their eyewitness experiences in public meetings with the use of slideshows and personal testimonies (K. Bird, interview August 1 2009; P. Palmer, interview 16 August 2009; D. West, interview 6 August 2009). The CCA not only had an oppositional stance towards Reagan's foreign policy in Central America but also emphasised the humanitarian costs such as the loss of civilian life, poverty and malnutrition resulting from the conflict. The CCA were not only dedicated to raising awareness around the deprivations the people of Central America were suffering, but were also committed to addressing the humanitarian crisis through providing aide and assistance to alleviate these problems (K. Bird, interview August 1 2009; P. Palmer, interview 16 August 2009; D. West, interview 6 August 2009).

The Central American anti-war movement gained national notoriety for its various actions such as the Sanctuary Movement, Witness for Peace delegations which travelled to the Central American warzone and the well-publicised Pledge of Resistance emanating from the San Francisco Bay area. This notoriety also devolved down to the small-scale grassroots movement in conservative parts of the United States. The CCA, a locally-based and decentralised group in rural North-West Idaho and Eastern Washington, was no exception. Dale Graden, a member of the CCA, comments on the dedication and awareness that he believed the CCA, as an activist group, possessed. "So [the CCA] I think are informed by humanitarianism, but they are also highly educated people. They are very, very informed. They know their history; they know their politics" (D. Graden, interview, August 14, 2009).

The anti-war movement put forward a credible challenge to the orthodox Cold War narrative that was being disseminated from the White House (Smith, 1996; Inglis, 1991). Alexander Cockburn, political journalist and supporter of the anti-war movement, recalls the broad tapestry of the dissidents:

[I] remember well criss-crossing America in those years, giving anti-intervention speeches on campuses, in churches and labour halls in scores of towns in nearly every state in the union. Almost every American town in every decade has its dissident community. At any rally you can see the historical strata in human contour. (Cockburn, 2007, p. 30)

## **A Coalition of Individuals**

The CCA underwent a process of evolution in its culture and structure. The organisation first intended to be a coordinating body for a number of groups who shared the common thread of opposing Reagan's proxy war in Central America as well as the promotion of social and economic justice in this region. This promotion was not one that used traditional socialist forms of analysis, but ideologically more of a liberal humanitarian concern and sense of injustice. NSMs such as the CCA can experience fluid rather than fixed identity as they react to the discursive interplay between members who share many of the same common interests but also express diversity in political ideology and approaches to direct action (Johnston, 1994; Pichardo, 1997). Groups broadly characteristic of the NSM paradigm, such as the CCA, can find themselves in a situation in which the group identity has to be continually negotiated given its emphasis on diversity, egalitarianism and consensus-building. Furthermore, as Epstein (1990) notes, this paradigm resonates with post-material values. These values emphasise quality of life issues, self-development, and self-realisation (Dalton et al., 1990). Moreover, the NSM paradigm can develop a journey of self-discovery and consciousness which can border on the ethereal. Dale Graden comments on the nature of his own personal consciousness, on which the CCA played a significant part in developing:

It has been a personal journey; there can be no doubt about it. There's a great Brazilian educator named Paulo Freire, [who] talks about some of the anguish involved with coming into sort of a personal consciousness, he uses a [Portuguese] word, *conscientiosou* – meaning "Coming into consciousness". Now, in whatever manifestation that takes, it's often a very conflictive process. So many of my values that I grew up with,

about upward mobility, about making a lot of money, about competition, get deeply challenged by some of the issues related to the coalition. (D. Graden, interview, August 14, 2009)

Graden further notes that activists' involvement can provide an avenue for self-liberation: "My naive perspective is that, for a whole lot of people, then and now, getting mobilized, or getting politicized, or getting involved in some form or another is a personally liberating experience. It is definitely a learning experience" (D. Graden, interview, August 14, 2009). Pam Palmer articulates that social change comes from the individual, who becomes a beacon of light:

What appears to [happen] sometimes [is that] some of these individuals become a spark or a light that others see and then they choose to follow along [and] agree with the brief as well. As through change ... I really think it comes from [the] individual (P. Palmer, interview, interview 16 August 2009).

Both Palmer's and Graden's responses emphasise the NSM paradigm of self-expressionalism. This steers away from what Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin (1990) note as being a traditionalist social movement paradigm which emphasises materialist class issues that speak both to economic injustice and inequality, class-based social movements motivated by a classical socialist outlook tend to steer away from emphasising individuality and autonomy. They emphasise solidarity and collectivism in response to operant economic conditions which are seen to subjugate and alienate the individual. Therefore it is contended that once an individual is freed from oppressive economic structures, an individual is best able to find unimpeded avenues of self-expression and discovery (Adams, 2003; Miliband, 2004; Alway, 1995).

Tom Lamar describes the life of an activist as standing up for injustice. Lamar does not qualify the nature and root causes of injustice as being economically oriented; he points to the need for individuals to feel that their voices are heard and as a consequence, the political institutions are attuned to voices of dissent. Lamar comments:

I think about the slogan we use a lot "there is no peace without justice" and that concept that if people don't feel like they're being treated fairly or they have a say in their direction they're going to act out against society and we really need to make sure that society doesn't get in the way of people's own

personal feelings of security and self-growth (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010).

Lamar's quote involves both a warning and an aspect of an emancipatory vision in which people are free to pursue avenues of self-discovery. This reflects a proclivity towards post-material values in that opportunities for self-development are given significance (Epstein, 1990; Inglehart, 1990). Lamar does not point to a classical socialist emancipatory vision in which it is contended that the individual, through a collective requires economic liberation in order to unshackle themselves from an alienated condition (Adams, 2003; Miliband, 1994; Alway, 1995; Lerner, 1982).

The tendency for movements that emanate an NSM paradigm is the creation of a natural outlet for supporters to display different expressions to the same cause (Johnston, 2004; Tarrow, 1998); and is reflected in Bird's observation, "Within 3 or 4 months, it had transformed more into a form of coalition of individuals" (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009).

### **Three distinct voices that emerged from the CCA**

Through the process of conducting interviews and researching the CCA archives (1986-1996) three distinct voices emerged. These voices belong to the groups of those who were more predisposed to a strain of direct action techniques such as civil disobedience. There was also a strong moderate voice who wanted to present to the community a moderate face and thereby better positioning the CCA to influence members of congress and the Speaker of the House. The third voice was more humanitarian in nature, placing more emphasis on providing assistance to communities in Central America rather than addressing the political nature of the situation. This was best illustrated by the Sister City association. Kenton Bird sums up the political contour of the CCA as follows:

Politically speaking, [most of the] Coalition would be Centre Left. And there were a number of people who were, what I would say more to the extreme Left who wanted to do more direct action; that is to engage in civil disobedience or block the entrance to the federal building or do something that might get them arrested. (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009)

As author and social activist Naomi Klein (2010) notes, the organised American Left has been buffeted for the last several decades. The Left has

experienced countless setbacks, notably in the weakening of the trade union movement, the Democratic Party's shift towards neo-liberal values and the move towards lobby groups dependent on corporate funding. Klein notes that the American Left has lost a sense of itself and is in need of reinvigoration sparked by a populist movement calling for greater social justice in economic redistribution (MSNBC, 2011). The American Left, from the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'New Deal', and reaching into the 1980s, was framed, in the American political space, as espousing liberalism (Abrahams, 2006; Brands, 2001). According to Davis (1981), this became a pejorative term in American political discourse as the Right was successfully able to brand liberalism as a term emblematic of weakness, relativism, as well as being supposedly contradictory to traditional American values. The CCA found itself in this milieu and lack of assertion, as described by Naomi Klein and many other authors. Davis (1986) has also pointed out that the Democratic Party's drift towards neo-liberalism commenced after 1978 under the Carter administration, as evinced by the dismissal of détente as a foreign policy posture, cuts in the discretionary spending in the domestic budget as well as the defeat of Carter's original Labour Law Reform Bill.

One of the more radical protestations that surrounded the activism in the Moscow-Pullman area relating to ferment created by Reagan's proxy war was known as 'the flag washing incident'.

One of the groups [were] promoting something called the flag washing and we were going to reassemble more groups around the country, and take the American flag, and put it in the tub and wash it with soap and water... and then hang it up to dry to say America's image had been tarnished. Our flag has been bloodied by our support for right wing dictatorships in Latin America. A number of people thought that flag washing was going to be perceived as... flag burning, as [it] desecrated the flag, even though symbolically washing the flag was being reverential toward it. But I think in the end, the small group that wanted to engage in the flag washing had to disassociate themselves from the coalition. They had to do it on their own. They may have created another group just for that purpose, to wash the flag; to avoid making the mainstream uncomfortable, because we tried very much to portray ourselves to the larger public as moderate centrist mainstream in the hope of attracting some conservative members. (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009)

Bird notes that the CCA wanted to present a centrist moderate voice. This was in order to increase support for the CCA's implicit objective of influencing key political figures such as Speaker of the House Tom Foley (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). One might also observe the Moscow-Pullman area is situated in a conservative Republican catchment zone. Neither of these University towns can be perceived as a hotbed of orthodox Leftist radicalism. Conservatives in these towns may have tried to portray this area as being liberal in nature although on closer inspection this was inaccurate.

Through analysis of the interviews what emerges is an organisational structure that promotes personal autonomy and empowerment (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009; T. Lamar, March 5, 2010; W. Miller, interview, July 24, 2009). In the case of the CCA the nature of personal autonomy centred around creating and carrying through on project initiatives: "Individual autonomy was not only allowed but encouraged." (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). Ideologically this denotes the individuation of groups who proclaim to be in the American Left. Traditionally, orthodox socialism has pointed towards a sense of solidarity gained through shared experiences of objective conditions, vision and revolutionary zeal. The individual is not subjugated but rather united with the majority of the population with the desire to fashion the world in a more egalitarian economic, social and political revitalisation reflective of the majority. This sense of purpose and vision highlights commonality rather than difference as traditional socialism posits that humankind, once liberated from oppressive economic structures, will invariably experience unyoked personal liberation (Adams, 2003; Miliband, 1994). The NSMs espoused themes more individualistic in nature reflecting a tumult against existing political and social structures. Although authors' such as Butler (1998) may argue such cultural concerns were resonant of the Left. A focus on culture and individual post-material expression has resulted in an individuated sceptical postmodernism. Such an emphasis on self-identity and postmodern assumptions emphasising relativism and the promotion of a self-constructed identity, steers those of a Leftist persuasion away from a shared sense of community and traditional socialist values which highlight a sense of optimism and a logic that human nature is not mired in a sense of nihilistic hopelessness (Miliband, 1994).



The CCA facilitated an organisational culture that encouraged its supporters to find individual avenues of expression. It also highlighted post-material NSM orientations to establish and promote non-hierarchical, egalitarian and informal modes of operation and participation. This can be characteristic of NSMs, as people are not so much members as they are supporters. This type of structure often times facilitates an easy on-off scenario with the organisation regarding supporters participation. In another sense, the NSM paradigm may facilitate supporters to feel aligned with the organisation rather than an active participant who may have to display a greater level of commitment regarding time, energy and possibly finance. (Adam, 1993; Garfield, 1994; Gusfield, 1994; Pichardo, 1997; Tarrow, 1998). Kenton Bird notes that the numbers of participants reached its zenith in the early years of the CCA (1986 – 1987); however as time progressed the numbers dwindled. Bird notes there was always a core group of approximately 30 individuals who could be relied upon for personal input and time devoted towards the activities of the CCA. To this extent the CCA possessed a group of highly committed and motivated individuals who came together in a collective manner whilst free to contribute on an individualised basis. As compared with orthodox socialism, this type of approach relies on individuals motivated towards action through a sense of personal grievance or injustice. Typically, NSMs rely on a self-consciousness infused with the values of liberalism rather than values of collectivism. This self-consciousness is not necessarily derived from a collective experience of economic and social conditions as laid out by Marx and Engels. In this new paradigm, individuals arrive at their own motivation and consciousness towards action (Adams, 2003; Miliband, 1994).

Tarrow (1998) notes, that groups who share these NSM structural characteristics often find difficulty in defining clear objectives and mission statements due to inconclusive consensus-building processes. Bird's following quote embodies Tarrow's observations:

One of the things we struggled with in early meetings was to try and write a mission statement or a valued statement or a set of by-laws through the group. After a couple of meetings of being unable to achieve [a] consensus, we gave up. And so there was no formal structure and there [was] no constitution, no by-laws... in terms of goals these were probably... [more] implicit than explicit (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009).

This kind of organisational development is not uncommon to contemporary Leftist politics in the United States. As noted previously, contemporary politics on the Left in the United States are largely single-issue oriented and imbued with post-material values such as greater democratic participation, personal expressionalism and an emphasis on individual freedoms. This points towards a Leftism, as laid out by Judith Butler (1998), that emphasises cultural and personal emancipation. As noted earlier, this differs to orthodox socialist orientations. From a Milibandian point of view, an emphasis on post-materialism, which also echoes strains of postmodernism, promotes a continued sense of negotiation in terms of essentialist core beliefs. If one does not believe in group cohesion, solidarity, and a sense of emancipation as espoused by a socialist vision of what can be accomplished, then contemporary groups oriented towards cultural Leftism are likely to articulate the arguments in a narrative which calls for greater rights rather than examining any root causes that beg for the recognition of rights (Miliband, 1994). This includes, in a Milibandian sense, a close analysis of structural, economic and social inequalities built around a societal embrace of a mode of production that invariably leads to competition rather than cooperation in society. Furthermore, this is an anathema to the creation of a new social order through democratic means which requires taking a long-term view underlined by an undying sense of optimism which has traditionally been so essential to the project of socialism (Miliband, 1994). This can promote an organisational culture of pseudo-collectivism as it stands to reason that contemporary Leftist groups do not promote an adhesive ideological culture that points towards historical progress and a historical mission (Adams, 2003).

Pichardo (1997) notes that an NSM paradigm emphasises cultural interactions creating a sense of identity, so through group interaction they arrive at, according to NSM theory, a 'constructed culture' and objectives that run implicit through the group. In such an environment, personalism can result (Adam, 1993; Garfield, 1994; Johnston, 1994; Pichardo, 1997).

An observation one can gather through the interviews, is that many CCA members had previous activist experience in the anti-Vietnam war movement, feminist movement and environmental causes embossed with the values and characteristics of an NSM template (D. Graden, interview, June 30, 2008; T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010; W. Miller, interview, July 24, 2009; B. Rigby, interview,

March 3, 2010). It has to be noted, compared to an orthodox Socialist world-view, that activism inspired by the New Social Movements did not highlight class as a definitive cause of marginalisation, oppression and subjugation. Rather, those who were active in the movements of the 1960s and 1970s railed against power and domination from a predominantly cultural orientation. A cultural orientation, by definition, requires the individual to be aware of their marginalisation and powerlessness on an individual level, through a process of what Paulo Freire (2006) coined as conscientisation.

This template encourages individuals to contribute what they can offer rather than locking them into a formal structure based on formalised criteria for membership. Such groups, egalitarian and diverse in nature, have sprung forth across the U.S. throughout the late 1960s to this present day (Bacciocco, 1974; Lader, 1979; Diggins, 1973). It is interesting to note, that although these movements have flourished from the late 1960s and into the 1980s, the trajectory of the U.S. political sphere has shifted increasingly rightwards. This takes into account the Democratic presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton (Abrahams, 2006; Brands, 2001; Davis, 1981). Self-proclaimed conservative Presidents, such as Richard Nixon, look positively liberal by today's standard (Abrahams, 2006; Baer, 2000; Brands, 2001). It must be said that the CCA and its supporters were not so far removed, in a historical sense, from the events of the late 1960s: the anti-Vietnam War movement, the Watergate scandal, the burgeoning of the Women's Movement as well as the Environmental Movement which came to prominence in the 1970s (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; McWilliams, 2000). The U.S. now is culturally a more pluralistic and socially liberal society than what it had been throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s (Baer, 2000; Brands, 2001; Isserman and Kazin, 2000; McWilliams, 2000).

Walt Miller, a CCA member and an affiliate of a National Organisation, 'Pastors for Peace', arrived in Moscow Idaho in the mid 1980s. Miller had been involved in Peace groups in Kansas before moving to Moscow. He recalls the CCA appealed to him because it provided continuity to his previous activism in Kansas. Miller notes that participating in the CCA allowed him to find meaning in his new environment and integrate into a community of likeminded individuals (W. Miller, interview, July 24, 2009). Being new to Moscow he wanted to find meaning through an avenue he had previously found significant. Thus he joined the CCA and strongly

believed in its implicit goals and values. What is interesting to note is Millers emphasis on finding personal meaning in a new environment through an activist group. This implies a deviation from orthodox Socialism in which personal meaning is derived from the shared experience, universal in nature, of being subjected to what Marx and Engels laid out as being the object of material conditions created by capitalist exploits. Furthermore, in the Marxian historical dialectic, when one becomes aware of the object conditions of class domination and economic subordination this produces a sense of solidarity and mission. This differs from a more cultural single issue emphasis in which activist groups share interpersonally defined and negotiated meanings that are fluid not fixed.

Professor Dale Graden recounts a similar experience to Walt Miller's. Graden was involved in protesting and writing against U.S. involvement in Central America during Graduate school in Connecticut. One of his primary academic interests involved the contemporary and social revolutionary history of Latin America. Graden took an avid interest in developments in Central America and was fervently opposed to U.S. involvement in the area. On arriving at the University of Moscow to take a lecturing position, he became aware of the CCA through his interactions with Kenton Bird. The CCA became an outlet for Graden to express his opposition to U.S. foreign policy and to express his unique perspectives and experiences (D. Graden, interview, June 30, 2008). This coalition of likeminded individuals allowed Miller and Graden, as with other members such as Palmer and Hastay, to find meaning and self-expression related to their activism both within and external to the group.

## **The Resonance of Post-material values**

Dalton et al. (1990) note that the new sensibility had arisen in part through socio-economic changes in the post-World War II era, in the U.S. This era featured growing levels of affluence previously unimagined. The United States' position, as being the world's leading free market economy, possessed hegemonic status with its ability to produce consumer goods and a domestic economy with high aggregate demand. The Reformed Liberalism, as laid out by President Roosevelt, formed a consensus that was to remain unbroken until the late 1970s<sup>23</sup>. The new found middle

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<sup>23</sup> Lord Anthony Giddens (2002) notes that the mid 1970s saw the beginning of a new era of the world economic order which later became known as globalisation. Through the use of technology large amounts of capital were able to shift more freely around the developed world. This put pressure on developed countries manufacturing bases as free flow of world capital would find havens in the most efficient competitive economies. The world economic order entered into a long phase of hyper competition. These developments in the mid 1970s put

class affluence allowed significant proportions of the U.S. population to experience material security for the first time (Abrahams, 2006; Brands, 2001). Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin (1990) support Inglehart's post-material thesis which posits that growing levels of affluence had produced a paradigm shift towards non-material 'quality of life' concerns. In summary, these can be noted as an emphasis on self-development and expression, a greater desire to influence democratic institutions, concern for the environment and concern for social justice issues. Epstein (1990) notes this post-material value orientation is resonant in NSMs. NSMs are characteristically championed by middle-class activists who by definition are in a position of relative material security. It is clear, through the occupations and qualifications noted in the interviews, that the majority of CCA members were middle to upper class in terms of social and economic stratification in the U.S (University of Idaho Salary Recommendations, 2007). The post-material values, it can be said with certitude, were resonant throughout the discourse of the interviews. Inglehart (1990) explains both materialist and post-materialist orientations:

Materialist orientations, emphasizing 'physiological sustenance and safety', are characteristic of people who have experienced insecurity and deprivation during their formative years, whereas post-materialist orientations express people's need for 'self-expression, belonging and intellectual or aesthetic satisfaction. (Inglehart, 1990, p. 134)

The post-World War II economic boom in the United States, for the first time in its history, gave the majority of the population upward mobility and material security. This increased affluence gave rise to what Inglehart describes as a 'silent revolution'. The silent revolution was signalled by a value change as the younger cohort of the 'Baby Boom' generation, influenced by different socio-economic conditions, made way for the re-prioritisation of needs (Scarborough, 1998). Drawing upon Inglehart's work, Scarborough notes: "as the 'needs' reflected in materialist and post-materialist priorities shape the potentialities of people free of want and fear, a 'silent revolution' of value change represents the re-ordering of priorities – not a vision of possibilities" (pp. 125-126). Scarborough (1998) describes the nature of these values as not merely representing something new as a value set but rather encompassing the values of the Marxian 'bourgeois' class: "Individuals pursue goals in hierarchical

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the welfare states of industrialised economies under tremendous pressure. Ultimately these developments partly contributed to the end of the post-war Keynesian consensus.

order – manifest in the ‘bourgeois’ values of older generations and ‘post-bourgeois’ values among younger generations” (p. 124). Scarbrough seeks, in a revisionist sense and in a post-materialist context, to redefine traditional ‘bourgeois values’ as ‘post-bourgeois’ such as self-actualisation and other quality of life issues. Moreover, Scarbrough (1998) relates post-materialist conceptions as influencing the emergence of the New Social Movements. Contemporary developments in the political sphere, in terms of electoral realignments and the transformation of party support bases, coupled with higher rates of urbanisation, educational achievement and a steady decline in the rates of unionisation in the United States have helped create a sense among observers that the politics of class are now less salient (Kauffman, 1995; Scarbrough, 1998).

Members of the CCA interviewed displayed a propensity towards a post-material value set. Themes such as quality of life issues; freedom of speech, concern over civil liberties, a desire to exercise greater influence within the democratic system, as well as a commitment to personal growth and spiritual awareness. Tom Lamar touches on several post-materialist themes in conveying values of personal importance:

[I feel a] greater opportunity for people to have a more significant influence in important political decisions... I think about the slogan we use a lot “there is no peace without justice” and the concept that people don’t feel like they’re being treated fairly or they have a say in their direction; they’re going to act out against society. We really need to make sure that... society doesn’t get in the way of people’s own personal feelings of security and self-growth (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010).

Pam Palmer noticeably speaks from the platform of a post-materialist/postmodern world view throughout her interview. As previously noted the postmodern world view holds that individual identity is a contingent negotiated experience of reality. Palmer speaks of endeavouring to be conscious of other points of view. She also has an eclectic and fluid spirituality. Furthermore, Palmer elaborates on her view of social change as germinating from within individuals’ consciousnesses (P. Palmer, interview, August 16, 2009). In a Milibandian sense, a consciousness towards the creation of a more democratic society based on structures that promote cooperation and compassion is found in a realisation of

consciousness that has been experienced by the majority since the industrial age. According to Miliband (1994), consciousness of operant conditions is what binds people together in a sense of solidarity and an optimistic view of what can be done. This is less transidental and relative than what Palmer's answer elicits.

Laird Hastay commented on the nature of U.S. power structures. On the surface of it, his sentiments seem to echo somewhat of a socialist prognosis, however, the use of the term 'powerlessness' seems to indicate a sense of scepticism if not cynicism towards the ability of a cooperative society bound by a vision for structural change. Furthermore, there is no sense of a socialist prescription for change, just a sense that a progressive counter-movement faces daunting, hegemonic obstacles.

It is not that we are confused, but that we are impotent. The American people are reasonably well-informed, but we are more or less powerless in the current social, economic, and political framework. In a culture where almost everything imaginable is for sale, the concentration of wealth leads inexorably to the concentration of political, economic, and social power. As Justice Brandeis put it shortly before his death, "We can have a democratic society, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of the few. We cannot have both (L. Hastay, interview, August 11, 2009).

## **Continuity of Political Consciousness**

A number of CCA members remarked on the CCAs historical linkages to the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Through their interviews, many past CCA members exemplify a continuity of political consciousness gained through previous activist experience. This carried through into the CCA political lineage.

Dr. Rigby, a New Zealander, who studied and taught in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, gained his activist experience from the Leftist student movements in the 1960s (B. Rigby, interview, March 3, 2010). He was also a passionate supporter of Citizens Association for Racial Equality (C.A.R.E),<sup>24</sup> a New Zealand organisation opposed to racial discrimination and involved with advocacy for minority group rights (Newnham, 1989). In the following statement, Dr. Rigby expresses a continuity of experience gained from the NSMs of the 1960s and 1970s

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<sup>24</sup> C.A.R.E opposed any economic, sporting and cultural links to South Africa during the Apartheid era. It was prominent in organising protests against the 1981 South African Rugby tour of New Zealand (Newnham, 1989).

which carried through into the CCA's activism against the Reagan administration's proxy war in Central America.

So there were people, who had dragged that American experience, and people who...had student movement experience and some people who were... socialized in the Women's Movement as well. We [had] a very strong women's contingent in the Coalition for Central America. And we were generally people who wanted to help. The people of Central America were of course at that time under attack. The Reagan Administration was funding weapons and supplies to the Contras in Nicaragua. And it was funding [a] repressive military regime in places like El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. (B. Rigby, interview, March 3, 2010)

Professor Dale Graden reiterates the theme of continuity of political consciousness carried through from earlier activist experience. "I would say its historical continuity and historical memory coming directly out of the anti-Vietnam and sixties movements" (D. Graden, interview, June 30, 2008). Graden further recalls that after being in Moscow for a few months he was inspired to join the CCA. He notes that he wanted to support the Coalition because of his awareness of what had happened in Central America. He was particularly opposed to U.S. foreign policy in that region. Moreover, Graden remarks on the military-industrial complex which was a theme that was continually reiterated during the anti-Vietnam War protest movement throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s.

I don't want to say that necessarily all these people's journey started with Vietnam... in so many ways [the] people who [became] politicized and educated during the Vietnam period [were] very cognizant of Dwight Eisenhower's statement in the [1950's] of the danger of the military-industrial complex... People [were] tuned into that and the way in which that manifest[ed] itself in terms of a foreign policy that [was] absolutely dependent upon war. (D. Graden, interview, June 30, 2008)

## **Dissent in the Conservative Realm**

Arising out of this milieu, the CCA based in the Moscow-Pullman area galvanised to protest U.S. interventions in Central America in the 1980s. Moscow and Pullman are remote University towns in North-West and Eastern Washington respectively. Both towns became the catchment area for the CCA's activism. This is somewhat surprising considering the largely conservative persuasions in these



locales. As a state, Idaho is unquestionably to the Right in the U.S political spectrum (Stapilus and Weatherby, 2005). Eastern Washington, in which Pullman is located, is a known conservative region of an otherwise liberal democratic state (K. Bird, interview, January 21, 2010). The CCA came to prominence during an era in which Dr. Candida-Smith, lecturer of United States Intellectual History at the University of California at Berkeley, contended that the United States had become increasingly liberal in a cultural sense since the 1960s (Candida-Smith, 2010). Paradoxically he asserted that the American political trajectory had shifted to the Right. If such trends as described above resonated in the 1980s and into the early 1990s, activist group CCA (a Left leaning group imbued with a cultural discourse) would seemingly prevail in the most unlikely of places.

The importances of Cultural Left themes that resonate with members of the CCA have profound implications. Moreover, the trend towards Cultural Left themes of egalitarianism, consensus building and organisational structures that encourage consensus building and autonomy within the group would have a significant impact on traditional socialist notions of collectivism. If such trends prevail in the CCA, then it could be categorised as a migration toward personalism.

### **Anti-War Movement Activists Experience the Travails of Opposition**

Reagan, a popular President for much of his tenure (1981-1989), had the presidential platform many referred to as the “bully pulpit” to communicate his objectives and rationale for initiating a covert war in the small nations of Central America. The anti-war movement unexpectedly forced Reagan to make surface gestures and offer reassurances to the American public that he supported a foreign policy regime oriented towards democracy and would pressure the Contras to respect human rights. However, his assurances and guarantees proved to be untrue as Reagan was bent on toppling the Leftist Sandinistan government of Nicaragua. Reagan resorted to what was labelled ‘low intensity warfare’. In some cases this meant training the Contras, on American soil, in guerrilla warfare tactics in order to undermine and change the orientation of the Nicaraguan government. However the tactic of using low intensity warfare caused much collateral damage to the Nicaraguan military installations and industry, and especially affected agricultural production. The tactics of the Contras went far beyond causing collateral damage.

The Contras were responsible for committing numerous atrocities (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). One of their more brutal tactics was called 'selective repression' in which entire villages were targeted for mass atrocities involving the loss of a significant proportion of the village's population. In some cases not even women or children were spared. Smith (1996) notes that the Contra forces often carried out these attacks under the influence of cocaine, detached from their actions and the human carnage they were inflicting around them.

Kenton Bird, one of the founding members of the CCA, sums up Reagan's foreign policy towards Central America as being one that was based on an anti-communist obsession:

Ronald Reagan's single minded obsession with communism and his fear that this Left Wing, really moderate, democratic socialist government in Nicaragua was going to lead to a Soviet foothold in the Western Hemisphere pretty much dominated his foreign policy for most of his 2 terms (K. Bird interview, January 21, 2010).

Social movements that call for societal or governmental reform can often, by their very nature, encounter staunch opposition. Social movements that are critical of political and corporate elites can draw opposition on a scale that can be punitive (Smith, 1996). The U.S. anti-war movement that challenged the Reagan Administration's intervention in Central America proved to be no exception.

The anti-war movement encountered many such forms of opposition. The Reagan Administration employed a wide variety of governmental institutions to infiltrate and intimidate as a way of confronting the anti-war movement. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was particularly busy during the Reagan era. It was not uncommon for FBI agents to interrogate anti-war activists, their friends and family, even to the extent of extending the investigations to activists' employers as well as landlords (Smith, 1996, p. 283).

Smith (1996), who wrote *Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central America Peace Movement*, notes the case of a young Hispanic student of the University of California who encountered the scrutiny of the FBI:

In November 1985, a Hispanic University of California student, who had been quoted in a local newspaper about an anti-Contra student protest, received repeated phone calls, a visit, and a lengthy interrogation by FBI agents, who insinuated that she was helping to smuggle arms to El Salvador. Soon thereafter, she received two

anonymous phone calls threatening that she would "pay" if she continued her activism, and a bag of decapitated hamsters were left on her doorstep (Smith, 1996, p. 283).

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) was also given extra responsibilities during the years of the Reagan Administration. Anti-war activists increasingly incurred the ire of the IRS. In one such case in 1982, two women returning from a visit to Nicaragua were the recipients of an IRS audit. One of these peace activists had never earned above \$12 000 per year. From 1982 onwards, a noticeable pattern emerged as a peculiar number of Central America peace activists encountered IRS audits. The numbers of peace activists being audited was disproportionate and the audits frequently occurred on return from peace visits to Nicaragua (Smith, 1996, p. 283).

Smith (1996) notes that many peace activists experienced problems with their telephones. These problems could be best described as suspicious in nature, as there seemed to be a third party listening in on various conversations:

On November 11, 1985, a Wisconsin graduate student, who had done support work in Tucson during the Sanctuary trials, had a telephone conversation with a newspaper reporter about the trials interrupted by a male voice, which said, "Are you two girls still fooling around with those stories?" In subsequent conversations, loud clanking noises on her telephone line forced her to end similar conversations (Smith, 1996, p. 284).

Furthermore, journalists writing about the situation in Nicaragua also encountered 'phone troubles'.

On May 5, 1985, a telephone conversation between two journalists about an article they were writing on "Nicaragua and FBI Harassment" was interrupted by voices heard in the background commenting on their conversation (Smith, 1996, p. 284).

Peace activists, as previously noted, not only experienced undue attention from the FBI and the IRS, but also encountered difficulties in having their mail delivered. Sara Murray, who worked for Michigan Interfaith Committee on Central American Rights, as part of her work sent three separate first-class mailings to individuals on her mailing list over the span of two months. Only one of one hundred letters reached its final destination (Smith, 1996, p. 285). In some cases, activists

who were sending mass mailings out to fellow campaigners had their mail “accidentally” posted to the IRS instead of their intended recipients. They had their letters returned and stamped with “Opened in Error, IRS”. The IRS and the U.S. postal service denied “collaborating” in misdirecting U.S. citizens’ mail in this instance (Smith, 1996, p. 285). In addition to alleged phone tapping, mail tampering and unexplained IRS audits, peace activists experienced a multiplicity of other disheartening occurrences:

The FBI and other organisations ... hired informers, posed as journalists, staked out leaders' homes to gather information, collected organizations' membership lists, photographed demonstrations, recorded the automobile license-plate numbers of protesters, collected movement literature, searched through activists' trash, reviewed their utility bills, and collected other personal information on activists for files. (Smith, 1996, p. 286)

Central American anti-war activists encountered, to use a Millsian term, the “power elite”. The anti-war movement displayed many qualities associated with NSMs. Anti-war organisations were characteristically non-hierarchical with an emphasis on consensus building; organisationally they typically operate from a flat structure. They also possess an anti-establishment mood and were critical of the Cold War narrative that had been dominant in America since the Cold War in 1947 (Inglis, 1991). Both the Democratic and Republican party shared a political consensus that vowed to contain the spread of communism. The New Left in the 1960s, the Vietnam War, and the critiques of establishment politicians such as Gene MCarthy and George McGovern did much to undermine this by-partisan consensus. However, the arrival of President Reagan in 1981 ratcheted up the Cold War narrative linking it to national patriotism and the American identity itself (Inglis, 1991). Those who protested Reagan’s proxy war were running counter to the prevailing national narrative. They posed searching questions which did not go unnoticed in both a provocative and punitive sense.

## **CCA and Continuities with the New Left and New Social Movement Themes**

In examining the interviews several continuities emerged between the CCA and the New Left and its successor – the New Social Movements. This is not to

suggest that in a purely ideological manner the CCA neatly fits into the paradigm of the New Left and the New Social Movements. However, responses from interviewees and documented evidence in the CCA's historical archives correlate with themes and structures characteristic of the New Left and New Social Movements. For the purpose of this Thesis and examination of the CCA one must view the CCA's activism in a nuanced way. The distinction continuities that emerge when comparing the CCA to the New Left and NSMs are a propensity to seek consensus-building when faced with important decisions, and an emphasis on individuals using personal creativity to find new avenues of disseminating information – contrary to what was being offered by the political and media establishment. The continuities between the CCA, the American New Left and the NSMs of the 1970s and 1980s are important because these movements, on the surface, may appear to espouse socialist values of community, cooperation, egalitarianism and economic and social emancipation (Wright, 1995). There is a propensity in the New Left and NSMs to call for greater democratic participation built within a desire for the citizenry to have a greater degree of control over their own lives. Miliband (1992) denotes that the central importance of democracy from below is essential to the creation of a socialist society, and furthermore Wright (1995) notes that socialism contains within it the promotion of individual autonomy in that once people are liberated from inequality and economic disenfranchisement through a revolutionary form of socialism, they will feel emancipated as capitalist control over their lives through power and domination, alienating them from their labour, will be eliminated. This will allow people to lead more meaningful and fulfilling lives (Miliband, 1992; Wright, 1995). This view of autonomy is related to a transformation in the system from below through democratic means with economic disparity and inequality as a driving force. In contrast, the New Left and NSMs are driven by a desire to transform a liberal democratic system from below. It is believed that a cultural revolution can challenge the reigning hegemony of the Liberal Democratic project. Henceforth, the focus shifts to issues and concerns that resonate with social injustice and inequality such as the disenfranchisement of minorities, the degradation of the environment, and a call for recognition for greater rights pertaining to feminist, gay, and lesbian movements. These issues can share a common thread in calling for democratic transformation from below, as well as a conscious protestation to alleviate cultural injustices to various groups and demands

for greater environmental protection. However, in contrast to orthodox socialism, class identity is eschewed in favour of a post-materialist, postmodernising view of personal identity and difference; therefore it is important to trace the continuities of the CCA to the American New Left and New Social Movements because they offer a new paradigm for the American Contemporary Left. On closer inspection, this new paradigm, as a consequence of its focus, can drift into fragmentation, atomisation, and a sense of scepticism as compared with orthodox socialist visions.

The CCA, like its counterparts the New Left and NSMs, expressed a desire to facilitate organisational structures that promote egalitarianism such as a flat non-hierarchical organisation. This also facilitated greater individual expression and difference. When asked what values he considers most important, Barry Rigby, a member of the CCA, responds:

Definitely freedom of speech. Because part of what I mentioned about the Coalition for Central America was that we operated very democratically. I had been involved in some work where some of the sectarian Left Wing groups decided that their political line was to be adhered to come what may... That was not what I believed in. And that was certainly not what the Coalition for Central America believed in. We believed that people needed to have freedom to express what they believed about a particular situation and the group should respect the beliefs of others (B. Rigby, interview, March 13, 2010).

Rigby points favourably to an NSM discourse in structure focused on consensus-building – one that is open to individual difference and somewhat non-ideological in nature. This steers away from orthodox socialist tenets because a grassroots movement from below embedded in socialist beliefs would not steer towards consensus-building, largely because the consensus surrounding issues of equality, democracy, autonomy and community would be agreed upon. That is, the consensus would be that these issues, in a liberal democratic structure, be subjugated to the disparities and organising principles of the free market. As a systemic root cause, Capitalism subsumes individual freedom and sense of selfhood. Capitalism inspiring greed, competition, and inequality, leads people to a form of individualism which can be reminiscent of social Darwinism as espoused by Herbert Spencer (Adams, 2003). Seeking to transform a liberal democratic structure without

revolutionary zeal, does not create the opportunity for a socialist society to emerge (Miliband, 1992; Miliband, 1994). This relates to the CCA in that protesting U.S. foreign policy towards Nicaragua, framed in the liberal democratic context, does not call for the transformation of American societies' organising principles around the free market profit motive. This has implications regarding foreign policy, as many argue that the military industrial complex is inevitably a re-production of capitalist structures of profit, power and domination (Miliband, 1994).

The CCA could be best described as adhering to an ideology framework of liberal democratic values as well as 'liberal-humanitarianism' (Mannheim, 1936). This would put the CCA on the Left in terms of the American political space. The CCA sought social and economic justice for the people of Central America while calling for greater transparency in the affairs of the Federal government. This points towards a desire, from members of the CCA, for a more participatory democracy in which civilians can have a more direct say over government policy specific to this case foreign policy. Isserman and Kazin (2000), in their historical research on the New Left, note the conceptual heart of participatory democracy contains a desire to exercise a greater influence over bureaucratic and legislative apparatus: "...dedicated to creating a genuinely 'participatory democracy' in which individual citizens could help make those social decisions determining the quality and direction [of their lives]" (p. 169).

Note, however, that the concept of participatory democracy does not call for a radical departure from the liberal democratic structure it could perhaps be best described as being reformist by nature. Operating from a premise that ideology, as Mannheim (1936) suggests, is a set of ideas which has rooted in the past in which the present is to be understood. The idea of a utopian vision is that which is hoped for in the future. Mannheim's conceptualisations are relevant to the CCA in that the era in which the CCA was active can be identified as a time of 'static ideology' (Mannheim, 1936). For a single utopian idea to bring about a social change it must inspire the actions of a collectivity. The CCA in close analysis fits into several of the characteristics displayed by the New Left and NSMs. With regards to collectivity CCA conveys a nuanced account. Many of the respondents clearly demonstrated a more fluid ad hoc perspective in their activism. Two important factors must be taken into account when reading this section. Firstly the CCA was a fluid and dynamic

movement that lasted for ten years. It had enjoyed a wide range of support swelling to two hundred advocates at the zenith of this movement. The CCA furthermore was able to tap into the *zeitgeist* of the wider national anti-war movement. This movement was effective in petitioning congress at many junctures to limit a determined executive in waging an undeclared war that some suggest is contrary to the War Powers Act. Perhaps as a consequence of the anti-war movement and distrust in many quarters of an interventionist foreign policy in which the Reagan Administration chose to conduct an illegal covert war which was later exposed to its full extent in the Iran-Contra scandal (Brands, 2001). What emerged from the interviews of former members of the CCA was that there were approximately twenty highly committed and motivated activists. They were encouraged to use their own individual creativity and efforts in finding ways to protest this proxy war. This was done through many avenues such as: fundraising, letter writing and organising forums and disseminating information that challenged media narratives of the establishment. Pam Palmer (one of the early members of the CCA) notes that the CCA had a capacity to incorporate different levels of participation:

I think that some of the people were like, I think there was something specific that they could take part in, so that they didn't have to commit to being a volunteer for the whole year, for 2 years or for whatever. They could just commit to coming in for the weekend, loading the truck with stuff. If they [could take] supplies to Nicaragua, then they would do that. And I think that [what] had more people involved was that there [were] some specific projects – people could just help with one specific thing without having to throw their busy days with one more thing, one more volunteer job or something (P. Palmer, interview, August 16, 2009).

Palmer denotes an activist approach which could be described as espousing flexibility and catering towards individual preferences surrounding lifestyle. One could assume that the CCA took this approach in order to make it palatable for a wide cross-section of people to take part in its activities; in sum, creating an organisational structure which could allow for people to be non-committal. This deviates from orthodox socialism in that an optimistic belief surrounding the historical dialectic led many in the majoritarian classes to pledge their time and energy in a structured and cohesive manner. The CCA can be characterised by two groups; firstly, those who were regular attendees to meetings and projects – in short, those who did the 'heavy



lifting' at the organisational level; secondly, as mentioned by Palmer, existed a much larger group who participated in projects and events which their lifestyles and preferences allowed. Therefore, the CCA in the Moscow-Pullman area was a community-based organisation that allowed people to participate in an ad hoc manner, without demanding members to be card-carrying activists of the CCA. It facilitated people's individuality and their community relationships. Many people took the opportunity to contribute to various projects such as the Sister City Project, which was a part of the CCA and focused on humanitarian efforts towards targeted locations in Central America. On close inspection, the CCA – politically speaking – was a movement motivated to activism rather than transformational zeal. They operated within a liberal democratic system; their focus was on influencing those in power as well as those who gave legitimacy to it (the Conservative Centrist Moderates).

CCA member Dale Graden has a history of activism, from his early formative years protesting the Vietnam War, through to the conflict in Nicaragua and the latest foreign policy posture regarding pre-emptive strikes against Iraq and to a lesser extent, Afghanistan. Graden regards the Federal government and its political military elites as disseminating disinformation. Graden's remarks evoke statements by the 1960s New Left, which drew upon C. Wright Mills' 1956 work, *The Power Elite*, describing an environment which interconnects various elites, viewed as a powerful apex, affecting both foreign and domestic policies. Intertwined with this New Left conceptualisation was a belief that the power structures, as controlled by a range of elites including the military, political, bureaucratic and corporate classes, were operated within a system that was deeply technocratic and layered with bureaucratic subordinates that created a sense of remoteness and unaccountability to the concerns of the American people. Such an analysis shares many parallels with a socialist critique, however there are clear, divergent ways in which they depart. C. Wright Mills' analysis is essentially a liberal one. He calls for greater individual activism in challenging the power elite that does not address the systemic ongoing chasm between the dominated and the dominator. A reformist agenda to strengthen individual citizen's rights in participation in a liberal democratic structure equates to a zeal for reform rather than a socialist structural overhaul. Both socialism and the Millsian perspective adequately analyse the nature of power in domination by the co-

operation between State, corporate, and military actors. However, only orthodox socialism proposes systemic remedial action to liberal democracy's dysfunction. The New Left espouses themes of frustration, calling for a more direct and accountable democracy (Mills, 1956). This conceptualisation fostered currents of alienation, anger and antagonism. By the end of the 1960s the New Left expressed a deep distrust of the political and elite classes. Such currents, as stated, were reiterated in the interviews conducted with former CCA members. Themes of distrust and manipulation (particularly regarding foreign policy matters) were not uncommon in CCA members' responses. Graden's remarks on the U.S. foreign policy posture, which he believes carries with it a large domestic profit motive, reiterates many of the themes of the military-industrial complex:

Foreign policy clearly is affecting domestic policy. Through all this... and this has been documented well by Noam Chomsky, for example, the way in which industrial U.S. media [and] corporate U.S. media control the flow of information about what was going on in the outside world. You know, portraying the Russians for example as being responsible for all of what was going on in the Cold War, which was completely untrue... The U.S. had just as much if not more to do with fuelling the Cold War as did the Soviet Union. Another good example is... the NBC [being] owned by the General Electric [Corporation]. You are not going to get from a mainstream television station anything having to do with armaments [or] arms trade... they are the largest arms producer. They are going to be portraying a very positive spin on U.S. foreign policy and motive, giving legitimacy to United States foreign Policy, aggression [and] disinformation. (D. Graden, interview, June 30, 2008)

Graden addresses issues surrounding societal and economic legitimacy in regards to media dissemination from the socialist framework and rightly points out the underlying drive surrounding the profit motive. However, no mention of class and its subordinating influences is mentioned, nor does he clearly articulate the wider implications having power and profit in the hands of a few have on the community, or for that matter, co-operation. He also apportioned blame disproportionately in that the Soviet Union was hardly a champion of democratic socialism. In many ways, the Soviet Union fostered and reproduced its own version of power domination and economic subordination – in other words, Graden's comments, in a generalised way, point towards the problem but steer away from a clear articulation of socialist remedies.

This is a sentiment that resonates with the plethora of movements in the contemporary American Left. MSNBC's cable network, founded in 1996, has developed a liberal equivalent to compete for ratings with the conservative Fox News Channel (Kurtz, 2008). Rachel Maddow, a former host of the liberal talk radio station, Air America, is a prominent critic of what she describes as the 'Belt-way media'. This term refers to the media establishment that covers national politics in Washington DC. Critics on the Left claim the media establishment disseminates a conservative to centrist narrative and therefore ignores stories relating to the Progressive Movements. Rachel Maddow host of MSNBC's 'The Rachel Maddow Show', suggests that the mainstream media ignores issues that concern the American Left. Her show frequently covers single issue platforms considered to be important to those on the Left. These include: the proposed conservative domination of the American media concerned with US politics, abortion rights, gay and lesbian rights, the Obama presidency's perceived weakness and championing of Leftist causes such as recent union stripping legislation in Wisconsin. While supporting U.S. troops she questions the high degree of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spending in the Federal budget on the military. She suggests this high degree of federal spending threatens the ongoing liability of Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare (MSNBC July 21, 2011 The Rachel Maddow Show). Former MSNBC host Keith Olbermann, is heavily critical of established conservative narratives that resonate throughout the U.S. media. Olbermann claims members of congress are beholden to powerful interests such as the Defence industry on both sides of the political divide. He suggests that this is blunting American democratic values thus creating a distance between the American people and their representatives (Olbermann 2007; Olbermann 2011).

Laird Hastay, a member of the CCA, goes even further in his critique of U.S. foreign policy. He questions its motives and accuses the Federal government of duplicity. Such a comment was not uncommon to the New Left, particularly as the Vietnam War intensified.

I was motivated to involve myself in this movement because the American government has been using [war endlessly] during my entire lifetime to pursue [an authoritarian] agenda that will result, if it hasn't already... in the destruction of Anglo-American liberty and the end of the American republic. (L. Hastay, interview, August 11, 2009)

Dennis West, in his interview, stridently opposes U.S. foreign policy interventions since the U.S. gained superpower status post Second World War. “The United States has gone around the world first for its own interest since [it became] an imperial power, imposing its political and economic will, that’s what it was doing in Central America, in my opinion” (D. West, interview, August 6, 2009). Hastay’s and West’s comments reiterate the ferment of the American New Left in the 1960s, but do so with a lack of self confidence and a clear avoidance of revolutionary zeal. Hastay introduces a qualifier, “Anglo-American liberty,” and West concludes his comments with the individualistic qualifier “in my opinion”. From the outset, the New Left believed authoritarianism manifested itself in several spheres, such as foreign policy, ‘the military-industrial complex’ and democratic structures perceived to blunt moves towards a more participatory democracy (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Jacobs and Landau, 1966; Lader, 1979). Moreover, New Left radicals also challenged existing notions of American patriotism and proposed a non-interventionist foreign policy (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Lader, 1979).

Both Hastay and West’s statements also echo Martin Luther King’s assertion that the United States was acting in an undemocratic and destructive manner which undermined the ideals on which the Republic was formed<sup>i</sup>. Writing about King’s April 1967 speech, in his book *The Last Crusade: Martin Luther King, Jr., the FBI, and the Poor People’s Campaign*, McKnight notes that:

[In] the main body of his text was a radical critique of America’s foreign policy and the counterinsurgency role U.S. policy was playing in the international arena. King stunned many of his followers when he expressed sympathy for the Vietcong and the emergent revolutionary movements shaping the politics of the Third World. Under the shibboleth of anticommunism the United States had become, King charged, “*the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today*” (McKnight, 1998, p. 14).

Jacobs and Landau (1966), in their book “*The New Radicals*”, summarise how many in the New Left saw the United States and its conduct of its foreign policy: “...obscured the principles of justice by administrative bureaucracy, sacrificed human values for efficiency and hypocritically justified a brutal attempt to establish American hegemony over the world with sterile anti-Communism” (Jacobs and Landau, 1966). Captured in this quote is a vision of a society which is more post-

material in nature. Valuing human needs over top-down bureaucratic values of conformity seemed to limit self-expression and the pursuit of an individual's quest for self-actualisation. U.S. foreign policy, furthermore, was seen as provoking a mood of conformity and alienation, so despised by those in the New Left and as a consequence, also affected the values of the New Social Movements that were to follow from the 1970s onwards.

Tom Lamar, a leading member of the CCA who for a time ran the coalition's office in downtown Moscow, illuminates themes of concern for political, social and economic injustices that were being perpetuated in the conflict zone of Central America in the 1980's. The people of Central America responded to the oppressive forces of social, economic and political injustices by forming a counterforce of limited 'revolutionary movements'.

If somebody feels their freedom is being denied by not having access to good clean water or good clean air or whatever it may be in Latin America, because of foreign policy or because of poor domestic policy in the country, then people are going to want to organize themselves. And so I think that's what was happening in Nicaragua and El Salvador, Guatemala and all [those] places. People were trying to change things because their freedom was being denied... they were simply organizing themselves politically to bring about change. And then the U.S. government didn't like it. And so we [the U.S.] were denying their pursuit of freedom. I think that's why the Coalition for Central America was so successful and other organizations like [it] (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010).

Lamar's quote reverberates with the premise expressed in King's well documented speech regarding his perception of the far-reaching effects of U.S. foreign policy. Note, however, that he makes no reference to a defining ideology, much less to socialist or Marxist concepts. A common theme within the interviews and implicit throughout the CCA archival material was a deep mistrust and scepticism towards the executive branch of the U.S. Federal government and Institutions and their role in providing tacit and open support for the proxy war being waged in Central America. This particular quote retrieved from the CCA archives exemplifies this:

This pattern of passing aid is so typical of the clandestine ways in which our government operates – in violation of the will of the people, the majority of whom are opposed to contra aid. It is particularly devious to attempt to pass aid at this time of the year when we are all so preoccupied with preparations for the upcoming holidays (Cowan, 1987).

Dennis West, a member of the CCA, states one of the key motivational factors for joining the CCA was their oppositional activities towards the Reagan-Bush Administration and their foreign policy posture towards Central America.

Well, I opposed the Reagan-Bush [administration] [and] their policies in Central America... and the Coalition for Central America seemed [to be] at a local, regional and even national level... [doing] a good thing... [by] opposing the Reagan- Bush [administration] [and] their policies in Central America (D. West, interview, August 6, 2010).

This statement exemplifies the founding basis for the existence for the CCA. The Coalition, like many NSMs, was localised in nature, ran autonomously and had a high degree of permeability. This allowed members, bound within the CCA by a common opposition to the Reagan-Bush Administration's foreign policy regime, to move fluidly between the CCA and other likeminded liberal groups such as 'Witness for Peace' and 'The Sister Cities' movement. Tom Lamar remarks on the enthusiasm on a local level to opposing Reagan's proxy war in Central America. He notes there was a real belief among the CCA members that they could make a difference:

I think it would have to be the activities of the U.S. federal government was such that the folks in the community decided we needed to do something locally. And there was a good group of people. I feel like it gelled together well with the motivation and the activism of all the different people that generated enough enthusiasm that everybody that was part of it at that time felt like yeah, we can make a difference and we can do something. You know, we can have an impact. And I think that there is a good level of energy... I had a strong feeling that we would have an impact (T. Lamar, interview, March 10, 2010).

The CCA placed great emphasis on disseminating information through its newsletters that the mainstream media refused to relay. Cowan (1987) proclaimed that the media elites were disinterested in providing information that may have run counter to the Reagan Administration's Cold War narrative.

Our press, unable to report anything as sensational as death squad activity in Nicaragua (as they can, if they so choose, in neighbouring El Salvador) does its best to fabricate what it may. Demonstrations in Nicaragua in recent weeks have all been portrayed as being anti-government and indicative of deep social unrest. On Friday, December 4, Peter Olsen

of Days of Decision (based in Washington, D.C.) told us that the Reagan Administration is doing everything possible to try and destabilize the Nicaraguan government internally. Read, read, indeed. But read the daily American press with a jaundiced eye, or at least read in-between the lines. Then search for alternative sources of information. Compare and decide for yourself where best to obtain your information on Central America (Cowan, 1987).

Our good friend, journalist Alexander Cockburn, has been speaking a lot lately about the American press... “watchdog or lapdog” as he often entitles his speeches. At the Coalition we read a wide variety of mainstream papers regularly. Each week, you see excerpts from The New York Times or The Washington Post or Newsday in this newsletter. Most of the time, we can spot the bias, blatant or subtle as it may be on any given day. More and more though, Coalition members are turning to the alternative press for a more balanced picture of what is actually occurring in Central America. Read for example, what Larry Seigle, of the socialist newsweekly based in Managua, has written about a recent demonstration there (Nov. 5) and contrast this information with the disinformation dutifully pumped out by the lapdogs (Cowan, 1987).

CCA members wanted a more participatory democracy, more accountable and responsive executive and legislative branch of the U.S. Federal government, liberal values. They did not speak of revolution, however, or a reigning ideology. Thus, although the CCA resonated with NSM and New Left themes which encouraged decentralisation, ad hoc organisational structures, and consensus leadership paradigms, there remained a solid core of 20-30 people who were deeply committed to a limited but focused liberal cause, protesting U.S. involvement in Central America, as well as working for political change within the system. To this extent, the activism, perhaps fitting more of a post-material NSM values set, still promoted traditional Leftist themes of social equality, anti-unilateralism, and a desire to see the people of Central America choose their own political destiny in a self-determined manner. Throughout many of the interviews, the humanitarian theme shone through. As Pam Palmer notes, several of the CCA members had connections to the Central American region and felt motivated towards action (P. Palmer, interview, August 16, 2009).

The theme of participatory democracy<sup>25</sup> is embryonic to the New Left and its predecessor the New Social Movements (Bacciocco, 1974). The criminal activities of the Nixon administration greatly undermined not just activists' trust in the Federal government, but also that of the wider American public. Bardes, Shelley and Schmidt, (2010) clarify the effect of increased cynicism towards the central government as a result of this watershed event in U.S history<sup>26</sup>.

Brands (2001) states that several factors contributed to a growing scepticism and anti-status mood that gathered intensity throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. One of the seminal events he recalls was the Nixon Presidency, with its penchant for secrecy and subterfuge. Also, the release of the Pentagon Papers<sup>27</sup> by Daniel Ellsberg, which outlined the covert activities of three presidents, gave rise to a sense that undemocratic forces were at work (Gold, 2004). If Nixon's Administration was characterised by the Imperial Presidency, then the Pentagon papers revealed the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations as sharing a similar taste for secrecy and the creation of what was called in the 1960s the 'credibility gap'<sup>28</sup> (Freeman, 1999, p. 118). In sum, the "credibility gap" was the gap between what was officially stated from the White House to the American public. Many felt that the truth had been disposed of along the way (Brands, 2001).

The Cold War narrative<sup>29</sup> and the exercise of containment as a foreign policy consequently allowed for a build up of executive power as well as increased Federal participation in the U.S. economy (Brands, 2001). The Cold War was presented to the American people as a crisis and in a crisis people are willing to place their trust in the government to protect them (Inglis, 1991). Throughout American history, there

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<sup>25</sup> Bacciocco, author of *The New Left in America: Reform to Revolution* describes the essence of participatory democracy "In short, this conceptualisation called for reform to allow people to have greater control over the decisions that affected their lives. The tenets of 'participatory democracy' implied a renewal of town meeting-style 'direct democracy'. Moreover, such clarion calls proposed a vision of society, which fostered institutions that were built upon "more egalitarian... lines" (Bacciocco, 1974, p. 56).

<sup>26</sup> "In the 1960s and 1970s, the war in Vietnam and the Watergate break-in and the subsequent presidential cover-up fostered widespread cynicism toward government" (Bardes, Shelley and Schmidt, 2010, p.112)

<sup>27</sup> Gold (2004) comments on the nature of the Pentagon Papers as revealing "lies that government officials had used to protect themselves from criticism. But few people read more than excerpts of the 7,000-page study. The revelations about U.S. actions in Vietnam had little immediate impact on government policy. The controversy over the study, however, indirectly led to President Richard M. Nixon's resignation and, ultimately, to U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam". (Gold, 2004, p. 8)

<sup>28</sup> Freeman (1999) describes the "credibility gap" as being the difference in reality between the official line of the federal government and the reality on the ground. In referring to the reality on the ground, Freeman is citing the events of the Vietnam War. The term was widely used by the New Left and the anti-Vietnam War movement as one of derision and scepticism towards the White House. The "credibility gap" was deeply associated with the public relations term "spin". Many saw it as camouflaging the truth (Freeman, 1999, p. 118). Freeman also notes that the term "credibility gap" "first appeared on May 23, 1965, in an article by reporter David Wise in the *New York Herald Tribune*." (Freeman, 1999, p. 118)

<sup>29</sup> Inglis (1991) describes the American Cold War narrative as painting a stark contrast between free market capitalism and centrally controlled Soviet economic planning. "The moral form of the Cold War narrative, whether in real Korea or on the waterfront, is that conscience trumps solidarity. The inverse of that lesson is that mass organization always strips you of your humanity. Essential humanity, the source of freedom and happiness, thrives in the quirky, the private, the unplannable. Communism threatens humanity by its remorseless planning, its eradication of the solitary and the strange. The canonical text of this lesson is 1984". (Inglis, 1991, p. 103)



has always existed an undertone of scepticism towards centralised power (Brands, 2001). Ironically, the Cold War ameliorated this to an extent. Faith was placed in the Federal government and its agencies to advance, in a somewhat progressive way, programmes and economic stimulus that could be used in part to promote the U.S. as being a fairer and more just society than its Soviet counterpart (Brands, 2001). The relevance of the Federal government taking a more activist role was that trust was built up only to be undermined by the disclosure of compromising information that offended many American people's sensibilities. The Left was by no means in a mood to exonerate the Cold War consensus in the 1970s. Many on the Left became very disillusioned and critical of the Federal government's far-reaching powers. Many had even turned on the liberal establishment, which had successfully passed many progressive measures in President Johnson's 'great society' initiative (Kimball, 2000). The New Left's criticisms of centralised power were articulated in a conservative manner by the New Right in the 1970s. By no means do the New Left and the New Right share a common vision for the United States. The New Left espoused themes of social and economic inclusiveness, a vision of a more direct and responsive democracy. On the contrary, the New Right cared little for these themes, instead promulgating a view of individual freedom born out of a more social Darwinist tenor (Adams, 2003; Walter, 1992). Furthermore, the New Right promoted, as in Isaiah Berlin's parlance, a view of 'negative freedom'. Nevertheless, these two opposing movements articulated a discourse that was sceptical of centralised power (Brands, 2001). Such a critique from the Left, Brands 2001 promoted a *zeitgeist* for the retreat of the Federal government initiating programmes to address social inequalities through legislation. Scepticism born out of Cold War Foreign Policies had deeply offended many on the Left and ultimately ended the era of progressive liberalism's reign as the predominant U.S. political orthodoxy from 1932-1974 (Brands, 2001).

One of the predominant themes that emerged through the interviews with former activists of the CCA was a distrust regarding the United States Federal government, and particularly its foreign policy. One activist, Laird Hastay, remarked: "this was a dissident peace movement that reflected a decidedly minority view of American Foreign Policy" (L. Hastay, interview, August 11, 2009). Hastay believes the United States has been in violation of international law since 1945. He acknowledges that protesting against the nature of the U.S. foreign policy and

proclaiming beliefs contending that the United States has a military-industrial complex is not a popular stand. He further acknowledges that protesting against the United States' involvement in Central America in the 1980s was also an alternative position to take in the United States political and cultural landscape:

Various administrations since World War II have ignored the Nuremberg Principles and the United States Constitution as they have waged unnecessary, illegal, and immoral wars against the poor of the world. The effect has been to steadily erode American liberty, which is based on the rule of law and the idea that no government should be allowed to operate outside the law (L. Hastay, interview, August 11, 2009).

Hastay's statements echo New Left themes of participatory democracy as outlined by the *Port Huron Statement* of 1962. The early New Left saw U.S. foreign policy as espoused by both the executive, military and corporate elites as being pernicious and a barrier to true representative democracy. Tom Hayden, the primary architect of the *Port Huron Statement*, viewed U.S. foreign policy as being entangled in the mystifying web of reciprocal interlocking relationships which he saw as representing what C. Wright Mills outlined as The Power Elite (1956). Hastay's quote resonates with themes of alienation from what he views as the United States' true constitutional purpose. He also evokes frustrations at the lack of popular democratic participation in the shaping of the United States' Foreign policies. His statements could well bring to mind Hayden's proclamation in his 1962 *Port Huron Statement*:

I joined because there was a chance to join forces with other local people who were revolted by American foreign policy in Central America and thereby affect that policy. That is, both the maintenance of the rule of law and the chance for ordinary citizens to affect policy were motivations. However, the U.S.A. is not a participatory democracy, for the very good reasons outlined in the Federalist Papers, so my goal was to figure out a way to pressure our elected representatives to do their job and enforce the law, especially the Constitution, which clearly forbids executive wars, and the Nuremberg Principles, which clearly forbid wars of aggression. (L. Hastay, interview, August 11, 2009)

Lader (1979) reinforces this point in regards to executive power as stated by the U.S. Constitution: "The American Constitution gives enormous power to the President to make foreign policy without substantial built-in checks from

Congress. The scope of Presidential power has, of course, been greatly expanded by the technology of modern war” (Lader, 1979, p. 404).

Laird Hastay, in light of interview questions regarding his membership in the CCA, also commented on what he saw as the eroding state of freedom at the time of the interview, which took place in August, 2009:

The passage of the National Security Act of 1947 was essentially a coup d'état against the constitutional authority of civilian government in the United States. Ever since the incarceration of Japanese-Americans in 1942, we have had a steady erosion of political liberty in the name of national security. What has happened since 9-11 has only been an acceleration of trends that began during World War II – and even World War I. So, freedom is very precarious and will remain so as long as we have a powerful standing military and a controlling corporate economy (L. Hastay, interview, August 11, 2009).

The U.S. Constitution gives considerable executive power to the President in carrying out their foreign policy agenda, whether it is considered militaristic, international liberalism, or real politik. The President is Commander-in-Chief under the U.S. Constitution and has direct influence in the final decision-making in regards to U.S. military involvement, or otherwise. Contemporary examples include President Lyndon Johnson waging an undeclared war in Vietnam during his presidency from late 1963-68, which was carried on by the Nixon administration until the war was ended with their 1973 agreement with North Vietnam (Brands, 2001). Furthermore, it is the point of conjecture as to whether wars such as Korea-Vietnam or interventions in Central America act against American principles. Hastay's remarks also articulate New Left themes of what they viewed as paradoxes in American principles. “[The New Left]... confronted the contradiction between American principles and American realities and would not abide it” (Matusow, 1984, p. 309). Bone points out the New Left's conception for the justification and use of power, “To those in the Movement [New Left], the justification for power can only be moral, and this means that power is ultimately and always responsible to the sovereignty of the people” (Bone, 1977, p. 121)

Laird Hastay's comments regarding the nature of executive power was reinforced by other interviews. For example, Kenton Bird believes that the preservation and care of freedoms guaranteed under the constitution, such as the

freedom of the press and freedom of speech, can act as a counterweight to executive adventurism (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). Walt Miller, member of the CCA and Witness for Peace, regards the protection of civil liberties as essential to guard against well-documented infringements by the executive in terms of the various freedoms as granted to U.S. citizens under the constitution and the Bill of Rights. Miller states two of his most cherished civic values are:

Greater opportunity for people to have a more significant influence in important political decisions and Civil Liberties. I want to be part of the civil liberties because of all the wire tapping, all the crap that the Bush Administration pulled off and the Nixon administration before [that] (W. Miller, interview, June 24, 2009).

Miller also suggests that the dissemination of accurate information is essential to a healthy democracy. He believes that participation in democracy is threatened by media elites who concentrate on disseminating a narrow set of selected news stories.

## **Motivation Towards Action**

At this juncture it is important to discuss motivational factors that prompted CCA members towards action. This section uses theories previously discussed such as postmodernism, post-materialism and basic social movement conceptualisations to ascertain members' individual propensity towards action. Cognitive accessibility is an analytical tool that comes under the umbrella of social movement conceptualisations as it is a force for consciousness-raising. Cognitive accessibility relates to the degree of awareness of an issue or issues that are perceived to violate societal norms. The concept of cognitive accessibility as described by Nepstad and Smith (2001) is discussed and applied to the findings gained through the interviews. The relevance of motivation regarding the investigation as to what extent CCA and its structure, practice and norms created by its members became atomised in a post-material/postmodern sense. It is highly important in discerning the nature of this coalition's collectivism and accompanying narratives.

Characteristically, protest movements are fuelled by a ferment that Nepstad and Smith (2001) describe as cognitive accessibility. This is a position in which people are exposed to information that contravenes a set of norms, therefore creating the conditions for action based on a sense that moral principles have been

violated (Nepstad and Smith, 2001). Cognitive accessibility can take a variety of forms. For example, a direct personal experience or exposure to forms of media such as: news articles, newsletters, personal testimonies and documentaries. These contravene prevailing societal mores and sense of what is considered to be acceptable. The CCA along with other Central American solidarity groups was involved in raising consciousness about a proxy war that was cloaked in the rhetoric of the Cold War narrative. Arguably for many Americans the interpretation of U.S. involvement in Central America was just a natural step in the historical struggle to defeat communism. Such a view carried a degree of resonance as the nation had, through its foreign policy, been attempting to contain the spread of communism since the late 1940's (Powaski, 1998).

Several members of the CCA visited affected Central American nations such as Nicaragua. These experiences created cognitive accessibility that provided an information valve that aided in galvanising the support of others in the Moscow-Pullman area. Personal ties and direct experiences fostered a movement away from cognitive dissonance<sup>30</sup> towards a compelling sense of moral outrage which lead to action (Festinger, 1957).

The CCA sought to counter the meta-narrative of American exceptionalism as espoused by the Reagan Administration which frequently used it to champion its foreign policy agenda (Abrahams, 2001) The CCA's critiques ran counter-cultural to the hegemonic nature of the Cold War narrative. In this light, proselytizing a set of counter narratives was perceived as being unpatriotic by many sectors of American society.

The responses of CCA's members interviewed were to some extent evocative of the theoretical positions laid out by Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Derrida, the CCA sought to promote the view point of what Lyotard refers to as the 'other'. The other in this respect is the marginalised voices of those who question the narrative of U.S. Cold War orthodoxy as well the voices of those affected by the Reagan administration's interventions in Central America. Contained in the findings is a strong critique of the concentration of executive power and the nature of what is termed the military-industrial complex.

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<sup>30</sup> Cognitive dissonance theory is a Social Psychology concept that seeks to explain an individual's reaction to the uncomfortable feeling of concurrently holding conflicting ideas. Individuals seek to reduce discomfort by the use of justification, denial, blaming and bias. Furthermore, cognitive dissonance can cause one to change attitudes, beliefs and actions in order to reduce feelings of personal discomfort (Festinger, 1957).

Pam Palmer, a founding member of the CCA, recounts her desire to become politically involved. She says that it developed from an increasing awareness of injustice through her personal experiences. This led her to become directly involved. Palmer recalls her growing awareness and interest in Central American issues: “there had been a movie I went to that had a big impact on me. It was called El Norte. It was about... a person... from Guatemala, sneaking into the country, into America to live a good life” (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009). And Pam further elaborates “through [writing] the newsletter, and everything [I] learn[ed] about different activities, what [was] going on, politically, socially and everything” (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009; Centore, 1991; Butler, 2001).

Palmer articulates further about the profound impact the trip to Nicaragua had on her personally:

We went on a trip to Nicaragua, and toured around. And again got to talk with people around the country..... I was able to talk with people from Guatemala, and Nicaragua and El Salvador, I learnt about the difficulties they were having in their lives. Women whose husbands and children just disappeared..... Never to be heard from again, and things like that..... so that... got me inspired, to be... more actively involved, and I was particularly interested in the children that I met there, and just connecting with everyone on... that person-to-person level. (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009)

After this direct experience Palmer was motivated to become more actively involved in the CCA’s activities. In her recollections Palmer stated that she was willing to give her personal time and energy to the CCAs activities: “And so when we were in Moscow, I would just help out with the organization... whatever they needed” (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009). Palmer and her partner at the time became deeply involved on a National level in resisting Reagan’s Contra Wars (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009). This involved petitioning members of congress and raising awareness through disseminating information that ran counter to the prevailing narratives as communicated by the corporate media.

Pam Palmer recalls her many trips to Central America. A central theme that resonates regarding what participation meant to Palmer was the humanitarian and the quest for social justice in the region. This was personified particularly by her commitment to the task of creating awareness and gathering support for

humanitarian supplies to this conflict zone. Pam Palmer reveals a traditional Leftist interest in social justice, human rights and in an underlying concern regarding economic disparities (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009).

Pam Palmer further elaborates that her experiences in the CCA facilitated her belief of interconnectivity. She comments it is the exchange of ideas in general dialogue that helps to foster understanding and therefore awareness. Palmer evinces a propensity for reflexivity that highlights the fluidity of identity and its accompanying cycles of construction and reconstruction. Such individuated philosophies are not unique to postmodern sensibilities. Postmodernist currents address the individual as being a 'subject' (Butler, 2002; Hutcheon 2002; Meiksins-Wood, 1995). The 'subject' by inference is shaped by discursive exchanges that construct a heightened sense of awareness of another person's perspective (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009).

In his book, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*, Bertens (1995) recounts that the conceptual framework of postmodernism emerged from art and literary pursuits. Bertens notes a tendency in postmodernist aesthetic critiques of modernism<sup>31</sup> that this contemporary development created a space for a new type of radical aesthetic autonomy: "...this particular form of postmodernism rediscovers and radicalizes the self-reflexive moment in an otherwise representational modernism" (p.4).

Greater opportunity for people to have a more significant influence in important political decisions; because I think about the slogan we use a lot "there is no peace without justice" and that concept that people don't feel like they're being treated fairly or they have a say in their direction and they're going to act out against society and we really need to make sure that society doesn't get in the way of people's own personal feelings of security and self-growth (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010).

Pam Palmer's interview answers reflect some essential currents of postmodernist thought. She remarks:

The purpose is to live joyfully. And the opportunity is to choose the state of mind that opens us to see from a different perspective. And the means is to recognize the other person is you... the second thing is to see the light in everyone and in

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<sup>31</sup> Meiksins-Wood (1995) lay out the broad set theories that constitute postmodernism are characteristically sceptical of modernism most vaunted themes. Such themes include a belief in continual progress, universalism, instrumental rationalism, a belief in the contingent self. Furthermore a distaste for the technocratic bureaucratic apparatus of the modern state.

every circumstance and event, and the third is to ask for only what I really want in every situation. And the fourth is to accept full responsibility for the choices that I make..... and the fifth is using positive energy and creativity to share my gifts with the world... and recognizing that where we put our thoughts and not just what we say, but also what we think, that that's what we get. And so, when we're looking for the light in people, or looking for the love, the peace, the joy in people, that's what we're going to get. When we work on... looking at the light in every single person, prior to there being a story that connects you with them (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009).

Palmer's answer touches on a non-traditional form of spirituality (relating to the normative religious practices of rural Republican states in the United States). This form of spirituality involves an eclecticism featuring aspects of the 'New Age' movements encompassing Zen Buddhism and a postmodern amalgamation of other beliefs. The main thing to grasp from her answers is an inward self reflection that does not place the highest value on rational instrumentalism. Rather a deeply personal experience that is not easily articulated or for that matter categorised. Hence, therefore the term eclectic probably best fits her answers. This eclectic nature is not uncommon. The postmodern ascent on eclecticism, Centore (1991) remarks, is that the postmodern *zeitgeist* (mood) is one in which an individual can will a set of constructed ideas in to essence. Hence the individual is no longer bound to work within the parameters of the traditional meta-narratives that institutional religion posits. An individual, viewed as a subject, is in the constant process of constructing and reconstructing their identity based on a self-consciousness which is contingent. Unsurprisingly the autonomous individual, spiritually speaking, can choose from a vast array of religious ideas bringing them together in a reconstituted personal fusionism. Dobbelaere (1993) remarks on this shift towards personalised spiritual eclecticism. He has noted that traditionally dominant religious beliefs have declined in significance and have made way for a new type of 'personal religiosity'.

Palmer remarks, draws on a broad range of belief systems, what she views as the contemporary state of the evolving nature of spirituality of collective humanity on an individuated basis.

I think this is evolving. The confused individuals are on their way to opening up to many, many, new ideas that are going to



shift the consciousness of humanity. Everything is moving toward a new consciousness, one with an awareness of the interconnectedness of life (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009).

Palmer's thoughts reveal a multiplicity of both postmodern and post-material currents. Her comments reveal a self-reflexive impulse towards the contingent self, for example, her reference to allow one's mind to be open to different perspectives. Pam Palmer articulates a sense of discursive representation. The 'other' creates an understanding that facilitates interconnectivity (Bertens, 1995; Meiksins-Wood, 1995). Palmer further elaborates in her interview that her thinking has undergone a metamorphous. She comments that the activities of the CCA were highly political as well as humanitarian, sensitive to the need to contribute aide to war torn peoples of Central America. Palmer's answers exhibited an underlying threat of self development and self actualisation. These correspond with a value set of post-materialism as identified by Inglehart (1997). Both postmodern thought and post-materialism, share continuities and it is important to note that both focus on a process of increasing individualist expressionism. Both seek a greater awareness of identitarianism. Furthermore, both evince an impulse that includes a trajectory towards the politics of subjectivity<sup>32</sup>. The atomisation of the individual as a dehistorised subject profoundly impacts many spheres of an individual's life. Palmer's responses contain a 'spirituality' that resonates both a sense of self actualisation and a 'revelatory' vision' that has arisen from the contingent self. A postmodernist worldview positions the individual as the master of their own self directedness (albeit subjected to the identitarianism of contingency). Commenting on the precariousness of freedom Palmer resituates freedom outside of a political framework, "If you are free inside, then it's not precarious at all, because no matter what your circumstances are, you will experience freedom inside" (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009). Palmer takes an anthropological constructivist view regarding the nature of social change:

I think true change comes from individual. As the individual grows up, they may become aware of different ideas around the world. They may ask themselves, "Do I think this way just because my parents do or because my community does?" They start to go down these different roads, experimenting

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<sup>32</sup> Jacoby (1972) posits the 'politics of subjectivity' involves political practices emerging from the New Left emphasising mood, self-development and existentialism that have created a politics based on individuated expressionism.

with what it's like to believe these things that they're choosing to believe, whether it has to do with family or community or a religion or whatever. Some recognize they're choosing to believe these things simply because other people do. They begin to question some of their values and forge their own path. Some of these individuals become a spark or a light that others begin to see, who then have the opportunity to challenge some of their own ideas. (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009)

I think we co-create experiences in this thing that we call life. We are interconnected in ways that are amazing. When we pay attention to living with present moment awareness, there is a sense of being guided. The person you need to talk to shows up at just the right time, you begin to experience synchronicities that don't seem to be entirely random. When you open to being aware of it, there is this sense of first being guided and then responding, as you are inclined. It's subtle and it's very fun. And then, when you become aware of it, it's incredibly amazing (P. Palmer, interview, August 9, 2009).

Tom Lamar was at the forefront in an administrative and activist capacity, in the CCA, in its formative years. Lamar comments his concern over U.S. foreign policy at the time:

Well, I think... the... activities of the U.S. federal government was such that the folks in the community decided we needed to do something locally... there [was] a good level of energy...I had a strong feeling that we would have an impact (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010).

Lamar notes that the level of confidence he had that the CCA could provide a vehicle for direct action that would have both the political and cultural impact.

There was a good group of people. I feel like it gelled together well with the motivation and the activism of all the different people that generated enough enthusiasm that everybody that was part of it at that time felt like we can make a difference and we can do something... we can have an impact (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010).

Two... things that... impressed me [were] Carol Smith's passion and strategy pushes. She really was convinced that we will be able to move the speaker of the House Tom Foley<sup>33</sup> ... His district was right across the border... She really

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<sup>33</sup> Tom Foley was the Speaker of the House of Representatives. In the structure of the U.S. governmental institutions the Speaker is third in line to replace the President if the occasion should arise. The speaker has a wide range of responsibilities and is the presiding officer of the House of Representatives. His responsibilities include administering the laws and procedures of the House. No legislation can be passed

felt like she had the opportunity to move this one individual that could have had a large impact on the entire show (T. Lamar, interview, March 5, 2010).

Kenton Bird, one of the co-founders of the CCA and currently the Director of Journalism and Mass Media at the University of Idaho, recalls his initial involvement through his former job as the Editor of the editorial page of the *Idahonian/Daily News* newspaper. Carol Budi Smith worked in Pullman as a home health nurse and was a key activist in raising awareness of what was taking place in Central America. Dr. Bird<sup>34</sup> recalls Budi Smith approaching him to write a series of articles about the events taking place in Central America and the delivery of humanitarian aid reported to be held up, in some cases by the U.S. Treasury Department. The humanitarian aid programme that Budi Smith was involved in was called 'Tools for Peace'. This was a group that sought to provide Nicaraguans and other Central American people with agricultural equipment that would help sustain their basic needs. After publishing some articles regarding the Tools for Peace programme, in the context of the United States foreign policy posture at the time, Budi Smith approached Dr. Bird with the offer to go on a study tour under the auspices of Oxfam America. Kenton was able to see firsthand the Tools for Peace program at work as well as the impoverishment and suffering of the people in Honduras and Nicaragua. Dr. Bird remarked on the how the study tour encouraged him to become active in raising awareness of events in this region:

And then I came back charged up and convinced my boss, the editor and publisher that we needed to run a special section to illustrate the local costs and consequences of the U.S. policy so that was a four page tabloid section that appeared in mid-March [1985] in the local newspaper (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009).

Dr. Bird comments that one of the key values he sees in civil society is the freedom of the press. An informed public, he notes, is essential for electing competent public servants (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). It is relevant to note here that Inglehart (1997) regards freedoms (including freedom of speech) as fundamental post-material components. "Protecting freedom of speech, because I'm

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without the Speaker's signature. Furthermore the speaker plays an important role in organising and appointing various members to House of Representative Committees such as the Intelligence Committee, Appropriations Committee and Armed Services to name a few (MacNeil, 1963).

<sup>34</sup> Kenton Bird is currently the Director of the School of Journalism and Mass Media at the University of Idaho since 2003. Kenton received his PhD. in American studies in 1999 at Washington State University (University of Idaho, 2011).

pretty much an absolutist [pertaining to this issue] – the first Amendment, the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press” (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). Dr. Bird mentioned in his interview that a large proportion of the CCA’s membership consisted of those in the ‘Baby Boom’ generation (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009). In fact, he notes at the time of his involvement with the CCA that he was in his 30’s and was one of the youngest members, therefore the CCA was not a University Student-driven movement. However, the values associated with the Baby Boom generation were arguably resonant throughout the CCA membership. Characteristically, Baby Boomers who grew up in relative prosperity cleaved to values that were less materialistic in nature. Values such as: self-determination, actualisation, egalitarianism, a desire to question authority structures plus a myriad of other quality of life issues deeply shaped this generation and its successive generations (Inglehart, 1997). Perhaps Kenton Bird’s references to the values of questioning authority structures and greater government accountability remind us that these were impulses throughout the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s, a time when CCA members came of age and also became socially aware. At this juncture one more observation of the CCA’s membership must be noted. The Coalition featured many people who were well educated and holders of university qualifications who possessed an awareness of the world as well as an understanding of American civics. Perhaps this is not a strange characteristic in university towns such as Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington. Nevertheless in a pre-internet world the understanding, comprehension and presentation of the CCAs activist narrative is impressive. Kenton Bird summarises his views on the Reagan presidency that encapsulates the perceptions of many in the CCA regarding the Reagan Administration: “Well, I had thought Reagan was a disaster as a President, I thought he was a phoney; he was a puppet for his manipulators. I thought he was easily misled by various forces of the Right” (K. Bird, interview, August 1, 2009).

Dr. Bird exemplifies a perceptual framework gained through experiences in Central America and a whole range of other schematic factors that one can only postulate. Nevertheless Social Movements require, according to Snow. et. al. (1986) these ‘perceptual frameworks’ are referred to in Social Psychology as Schema or a process known as framing.

A theme that echoes throughout the CCA's opposition to the conflicts in Central America, was the need not only to investigate what was really happening in this theatre of conflict, but also through the Coalition's newsletters, discussions, slide shows, and other public forums, to disseminate information that was not being reported by the mainstream media. The fact that many Coalition members had been to Central America, thus establishing personal ties to the region, consequently meant that they were paying close attention to developments there. An underlying theme was a desire to have a greater voice in influencing important functions of the Federal government, particularly foreign policy.

The Reverend Walt Miller was an active member of the CCA who had a history of activism advocating against none violence and the promotion of social justice and peace. Reverend Miller and his involvement in the CCA:

When I first moved out here, the coalition for Central America was up and running. And I'd been involved in certain peace groups back in Kansas, and so it serves as a natural flow for me... The motivation was that I'd been in these groups. I'm very uh, [into] liberation theology and all the stuff coming out of Central America in terms of the Christian [liberation] based communities... The coalition for Central America was a ready-made group that I got involved in. And then I got involved with Witness for Peace in summer 1986, and went with the delegation to Nicaragua which is right in the middle of the contra war... If you're at all going to be interested peace and justice and the welfare of the common person, you got to find groups like this to connect with (W. Miller, interview, July 24, 2009).

Reverend Miller is also a member of the present day Palouse Peace Coalition (PPC). He pointed out in his interview that his faith plays a major motivational role towards his involvement in both the CCA and the PPC. He believes that inherently in Christianity are scriptures and doctrines that clearly point to achieving social justice, standing up against injustice and to seek the welfare of your fellowman. One of Reverend Miller's favourite scriptures, that he specifically alluded to in the elite interview, was Micah 6:8 which ask individuals to walk humbly, act mercifully and seek justice. Walt Miller expressed a desire to practice his faith through actions and for him the vehicles of the CCA and the PPC provide a great outlet (W. Miller, interview, July 24, 2009). Walt Miller describes the nature of the affliction that was taking place in many communities throughout Central America: "The Christian based

community which was primarily Roman Catholic, in Central America and Nicaragua...was very close, took a lot of risks, many activist priests were killed” (W. Miller, interview, July 24, 2009).

What emerges through the interviews regarding the nature of CCA participants is the high level of cognitive accessibility both on a personal and awareness-consciousness level. As noted Central America was not an area that sparked a great deal of cognitive awareness before the implementation of Reagan’s covert operations in Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. The noticeable catalyst towards activism was the personal experiences gained from Moscow and Pullman CCA members who visited this region. This bought about politically emotional energy to protest and lobby the actions of the Reagan Administration. For those who were not able to travel to the conflict theatres of Central America were not left with a sense of personal detachment because the CCA members who travelled to these areas brought back with them photos. These were collated into a slide show, personal testimonies as to what they saw and experienced, as well as the use of documentaries books that were relevant to the experiences that the people of Central America were enduring. These factors contributed to a powerful identification that warded off cognitive dissonance. Perhaps more importantly it helped to create ‘passionate politics’ which amounted to a relatively small political and social movement acting both locally and in a sense globally.

Laird Hastay throughout his interview displays an inclination towards motivational factors that are enshrined with legal conceptions of ‘just’ war, liberal internationalism as a foreign policy orientation, as well as a firm belief in multi-lateral institutions and the respect and recognition of international law. He believes the United States, particularly since 1945, has been the primary protagonist in violating much of the state of legalities. His list of grievances with regards to American foreign policy could be said to resemble an anti-institutional mood, which could be seen as echoing the New Left vis-à-vis critiques of foreign policy (L. Hastay, interview, August 11, 2009).

Kulynych (1997) redefines the traditional notions of political participation as laid out by political scientists who have questioned why people become political actors. Kulynych suggests that the question to be asked now - is what does

participation mean? Postmodernist theories can be used to elucidate moods (*zeitgeist*), currents, and paradigmatic shifts in world view. Both Kulynych (1997) and Jameson (1984) contend that Western society has experienced major socioeconomic shifts in the past 40 years brought about by the globalisation of hyper-capitalism. Furthermore, Western society has transformed from a reliance on blue-collar industries such as manufacturing to a post-industrial knowledge economy. Kulynych argues that such shifts have produced a deepening sense of cynicism towards traditional concepts of truth, democracy and the universalistic presuppositions of instrumental rationality. This current age is one in which the very notion of representation is contested and delegitimised. For example, the traditional notions of equality are now challenged, because equality in the past could be summed up as being a legal construct without taking into account differing identities of marginalised groups. Recognition now has become aligned with the extension of civil rights. The individual and collective identities, in response to socio-economic currents, have become decentred. The power of the state has increased in its size and scope as has its presence in our daily lives; concurrently technology and bureaucratisation have also become ubiquitous (Kulynych, 1997). Moreover, this has raised questions regarding what democratic participation looks like as the omnipresent power of the state and its technocratic and complex bureaucracy increasingly distanced itself by its very nature from the influence of the citizenry (Kulynych, 1997).

Habermas (1992) describes a contemporary world in which the scope for effective citizen-led political action and demands for a more direct democracy have become limited. Democratisation has been blunted by a multiplicity of factors. Firstly, the modern Neoliberal state operates in a globalised-marketplace that emphasises hyper-competition. Far from Reaganesque Thatcherist claims that announce the greatness of small government, the new world economic order (neoliberal in its foundations) requires a far greater degree of interdependence between the state and the economic order. Consequently, this has led to a construction of a powerful state apparatus which has permeated into our personal lives. In a sense, the 60s mantra of 'the personal has become political' has been turned on its head; the new mantra is that the modern administrative state translates into the political influences individual realities (Kulynych, 1997). Secondly, the process of political decision-making has become increasingly technocratic and relies on the input of

many actors towards the formulation of policy. In short, political decision-making has become far more complex and nuanced in the past several decades. This can be viewed by some as the bureaucratisation of the state. The effect of this means citizen input into policy making is an abstract, idealistic concept. Kulynych (1997) states that the contemporary condition of the power of the state: "...and the subsequent colonization of a formerly sacred private sphere by a ubiquitous administrative state, render traditional modes of political participation unable to provide influence, privacy, legitimacy, and self-development (para. 12)."



## **Chapter Four: The Palouse Peace Coalition: Activism and Awareness**

### **The Bush Doctrine: Going on the Offence**

The United States' foreign policy in response to the traumatic event of September 2001 was reevaluated and repositioned. A new posture was to be adopted and it was based on a school of thought that had been permeating for over six decades. The school of thought was known as Neoconservatism (Neocons) and was influenced by scholars such as Irving Kristol, Albert Wohlstetter and Jeanne Kirkpatrick to name but a few. The original Neoconservative adherence was of a liberal persuasion and they generally voted for the Democratic Party. Boot (2002) notes Neoconservatives were renowned for possessing a social policy critique. In response to the events of the 1960s, the Neoconservatives became promulgators of the bastion of traditional institutions and values. The Neoconservatives were severely critical of social liberalism and its perceived encroachment into academia as well as the arts. Neoconservatives also discarded excessive libertarianism (Boot, 2002; Delahunty and Yoo, 2009). However, the Neoconservative movement primary focus was on foreign policy. This was an area in which they were to steadily grow in influence and stature, culminating with their extensive sway over the Bush administration's foreign policy posture. The publication of the Bush doctrine as a strategic foreign policy approach in 2002 warmed many of the hearts of ardent Neoconservatives (Boot, 2002; Delahunty and Yoo, 2009). During the Cold War the Neoconservatives were naturally ardently anti-Communist and supported an aggressive foreign policy to combat its perceived threat to the Western World. The splintering of the Cold War consensus in the Democratic Party in the late 1960s angered the Neoconservatives. As a response they looked towards those of a similar persuasion who were members of Congress in the Democratic Party. Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, from Washington State, was a representative who shared their beliefs in what could be described as 'hawkish' internationalism (Boot, 2002). Jackson's school of thought was declining in relevance in the Democratic Party. The Neoconservatives were to soon find a replacement in Ronald Reagan, who was to go on to achieve executive power in 1981 (Boot, 2002; Delahunty and Yoo, 2009). President Reagan abandoned the former Republican posture of

*realpolitik* as championed by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Reagan declared the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire' and immediately recalibrated the United States foreign policy to a more aggressive tenor. Under the Reagan administration the United States embarked on a programme of significant defence spending. Boot (2002) noted that the Neocons gained some degree of influence in the formulation of foreign policy in the Reagan presidency.

However, it has been under the presidency of George W. Bush that Neoconservatives had gained their most clout.

The Bush administration featured prominent Neoconservatives such as Vice-President Dick Cheney, Under Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, (nicknamed the Prince of Darkness). These conduits were adept at articulating the Neoconservative posture after the events of September 11, 2001. Two particular ideas that the American public believed about their nation's position in the world, was firstly the conviction, that the United States had a responsibility to promote American liberal democratic values of individual freedom and democracy (Abrahams, 2006). Secondly, that the primary responsibility of the United States Federal Government was to protect its citizens from foreign threats. This was a consequence of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, as it seemed that the United States was susceptible to a plethora of suspected terrorist attacks ranging from the possibility of a detonation of a 'dirty bomb' in Lower Manhattan to the terrorist blowing up valuable iconic infrastructure targets such as the Hoover Dam and the Manhattan Bridge. Selden (2004) notes that: "Whatever the actual causes of U.S. action in any particular instance, those principles loom large in the public debate and shape how and when the United States becomes involved in other countries' affairs" (para.2). One of the underlying assumptions of the Neocon movement is the belief that the United States is the preeminent global military power and this needs to be projected in a far greater way to guarantee its security. It was postulated that if the United States could project its power, engaging in pre-empted war against potential threats when necessary, it could greatly secure both the United States and world security as a whole. One of the preeminent assumptions of the Neoconservative movement was that if the United States could spread democracy and capitalism with an understanding that liberal democracies are most unlikely to ever go to war with one another. Furthermore, liberal democracies are most unlikely to engage in terrorist

activities and proliferate or use weapons of mass destruction (Boot, 2002; Fukuyama, 2005; Delahunty and Yoo, 2009). Neoconservative think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute and the Project for the New American Century were most influential in fuelling debate and offering foreign policy prescriptions to the United States political class especially in Republican circles. Their ideas were particularly influential in through the medium of Neoconservative journals such as the *Weekly Standard* and the *National Interest* (Rothstein, 2002).

Fukuyama (1995) describes the Bush Doctrine as a description for pre-emptive war. This was outlined in the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States. The strategy identified the use of pre-emptive war as a way of curtailing the dangers the National Security rogue states such as President Bush later identified as Iran, Iraq and North Korea. The United States would act unilaterally, if necessary, to eliminate these threats (Fukuyama, 2005). This doctrine became the foundation to launch what was viewed as a pre-emptive war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. It was believed that Saddam Hussein was harbouring weapons of mass destruction, was acting as a haven for terrorist activity and was a threat for these two reasons to the United States and its allies (Fukuyama, 2005). The United States invaded Iraq in March 2003. This action was considered to be unilateral and sparked protest throughout the world. The United States proved no exception in this respect as mass demonstrations took place in many major American cities. The American Left, as Alexander Cockburn (2007) observed, coalesced as they had done previously during the Vietnam War and in the Contra Wars during the 1980s. Protests were to occur in the most unlikely places and the Moscow-Pullman area was to prove no exception.

### **PPC: Reason For Being**

One of the founders of the Palouse Peace Coalition was Pastor Dean Stewart, who was the former Pastor of the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Moscow Idaho. In 2001, Pastor Stewart and a cluster of his church members established a group within the congregation that sought to create awareness relating to non-violent resolution to conflict (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009). It was to be run in a consensus-based egalitarian manner. Pastor Stewart commented that the events of September 11, 2001 and the ensuing U.S. foreign policy response prompted some difficult questions to be asked. Stewart noted that with the looming invasion of Afghanistan in October

2001, he felt that the group needed to extend its reach beyond the Church's sanctuary. Pastor Stewart states that amongst his congregation this was not always a well received initiative, as Stewart described, many in his church supported President Bush's neo-conservative foreign policy posture. Members of the congregation, Dean Stewart states, were opposed to dissident voices questioning the United States' invasion of a distant Central-Asian outpost.

Dr. Kurt Queller, a member of Stewart's group, commented that the mood amongst many supporters of the Iraq war (within his Lutheran Congregation) possessed an attitude that U.S. citizens needed to demonstrate solidarity for the President as Commander-in-Chief. As a point of interest, Queller observed that, many people were of the view that it was acceptable to question the Administration's actions. However, once action was taken in 2003 to invade Iraq there was a process in which the voices of dissent quietened in place of support of the Administration and the U.S. troops carrying out their orders (K. Queller, interview, July 19, 2009). Pastor Stewart reiterates Queller's comments, in a more strident manner, stating that a pervasive mood existed across the United States in which dissenting voices raising questions around the Administration's foreign policy in the Middle East, were labelled as being unpatriotic as well as being unsupportive of the troops (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009; K. Queller, interview, July 19, 2009). He recalls that voices of dissent could be silenced by being labelled as 'unpatriotic' if not un-American. An example of heightened discourse in conflict the anti-war movement was offered by Fox News host Bill O'Reilly who stated, in early 2003, that he expected that once the Iraq war began that every American was to be supportive of the Bush Administration's actions (Tomasky, 2003). O'Reilly further stated that American citizens should keep any disagreement with the war silent, and furthermore should they actively protest the war, he would personally consider them 'enemies of the state' (Tomasky, 2003). Michael Savage, a syndicated talk show host, suggested that the Sedition Act be reintroduced to muzzle voices of dissent against the Iraq and Afghanistan war. Savage publically called for the widespread detainment of anti-war activists (Tomasky, 2003). Pastor Dean Stewart commented there was a pervading mood at the time that silenced the voices of dissent and hinder their attempts to organise and demonstrate public solidarity with an anti-war stance. Cockburn (2007) illustrated this point. He suggests that in the Vietnam War the New Left, particularly

as Vietnam intensified, became increasingly supportive of all forms of resistance to U.S. military action. This included a sense of sympathy for the Viet Cong amongst those supportive of resistance to the draft in the mid-1960s. Lader (1997) pointed out that as the New Left became increasingly radicalised, support for Leftist third world revolutionary movements had intellectual currency within the New Left movement in the United States.

The anti-contra movement of the 1980s opposing Reagan's proxy war in Central America, like its New Left forbearers, were also sympathetic to those resisting the direct implementation of U.S. foreign policy in Nicaragua. Those involved in the anti-war movement were broadly sympathetic to the Sandinistan regime. The Sandinistas were viewed as a movement championing self-determination for their country (Cockburn, 2007; Smith, 1996). Cockburn (2007) draws a distinction vis-à-vis anti-war activism in the anti-Iraq War movement in the early 2000s and beyond. The appetite of previous movements in support of foreign resistance was not a narrative that was disseminated. Support for Iraqi insurgents by the anti-war movement was considered to be inappropriate. This is in direct contrast, as previously alluded to, to the support by sections of the SDS for the Viet Cong during the Vietnam anti-war movement. Additionally, this is also in contrast to the Contra anti-war movement of the 1980s (Cockburn, 2007, p. 32). One may acknowledge, however, the travails of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century presented a complexity born out of trauma from the events of September 11, 2001. The prevailing mood became a causal factor, on analysis, on the nature of the anti-Iraq war ferment. Cockburn (2007) states that the Iraq anti-war movement became process orientated. He points out those movements such as MoveOn were interested in effecting the political stance of the Democratic Party. Cockburn further notes that the anti-war movement in a broad sense was subservient to the Democratic Party. Lastly, he notes that as the Iraq war continued into 2008 the narrative of the movement increasingly became anti-Bush more than anti-war (Cockburn, 2007, pp. 33-36).

## **Peace Vigils**

Stewart's group started doing weekly Friday night peace vigils in the town's centre, Friendship Square (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009). The idea behind the

peace vigil, Stewart remarks, was to have a time and a space designated for contemplative reflection, singing, prayer and an opportunity for people to demonstrate personal expressions of peace. This took many forms such as silent contemplation, use of placards, the symbolic use of candles and discussion. The group's weekly vigil attracted a wider group of participants – many of whom belonged to other denominations, such as the Unitarian, Episcopalian and Presbyterian Churches and various other groupings of faith and also included those who did not identify with any particular religion (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009). Dr. Queller commented: "America right now is 'anti-war', in the sense that about two thirds of the people think the occupation of Iraq is a bad business and the troops should come home" (K. Queller, interview, July 19, 2009).

Pastor Stewart's group amalgamated with other concerned citizens seeking an outlet of expression in opposition towards the prevailing foreign policy posture of the Bush Administration. They established an overarching peace coalition which became known as the Palouse Peace Coalition (PPC). Stewart commented that the PPC attracted a diverse range of activists, ranging from entrenched Liberal Democrats to those of a self-described Leftist persuasion and some Independents.

Stewart explained that the PPC grew from 5 to 45 people during the early years (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009). He pointed out the growth of the PPC from 2001 to the Iraq invasion in 2003 promoted an atmosphere in which discourse regarding the war became intense at times. As the numbers of PPC supporters grew, the use of Friendship Square, which is the proverbial 'town square' of downtown Moscow, became an unsuitable venue to hold public discussions and debates (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009).

It grew [from] 5 or 6 [members] during the formative early days to approximately 40. This made it difficult to talk out there in a large group in this public square with cars going by and people asking questions all the time (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009).

Stewart further comments:

[We started a] group that [we] called the Peace Coalition... so we could strategise... in terms of [what] we might want to do besides standing around silently, talking, and every once in a while singing songs. So we mobilized into groups that did research, invited people for lectures and public panels, film festivals, and invited other people to come to town to speak so

that it might be helpful for more and more people (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009).

Pastor Stewart believed that panel discussions and other forums that the PPC provided gave people the opportunity to express intense feelings of opposition to the war. He felt personally that there needed to be this type of forum as he and many others saw the United States' involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan as a strategically deficient foreign policy (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009; D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009; J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009; K. Queller, interview, July 19, 2009). The forums, however, were also an opportunity to allow those who supported the war to ask for clarification as to why Stewart and other members of the PPC were opposed to the war. Stewart believed that this was a necessary and healthy outlet in reaching a degree of understanding (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009). He also notes that for people whose position on the war was less entrenched, the Coalition sought to provide them with information regarding the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Pastor Stewart hoped that the promotion of an open dialogue would promote peaceful, non-violent resolutions to the prevailing American statecraft (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009).

The activities and audience of the PPC from 2001 to 2009 covered a spectrum of the American Contemporary Left<sup>35</sup>. From moderate calls for social justice and an end to what some proponents might describe as 'Foreign policy adventurism', to those who held more entrenched views about the nature of inequality related to the structures of U.S. capitalism. Also discussed were other concerns relating to neoliberal globalisation, free trade and environmental issues (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009; D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009; J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009; K. Queller, interview, July 19, 2009).

The two main figures that emerged as the primary motivators towards action were Pastor Dean Stewart and the late Jerry Swenson. For Pastor Stewart, his involvement with the founding of the PPC appeared as a natural progression from the ferment within his Church based group. This ferment was focused towards creating a community based, inclusive and pluralistic group to challenge what was

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<sup>35</sup> The term 'Liberal' in the political space of the United States has mutated to euphemistically denote, in broad terms, the views of the American Left. However, this is problematic in ideological terms as U.S. Liberals often champion single-issue platforms that could be described as Socially Liberal. Throughout the 1970s to this present day American Liberals promoted NSM themes calling for greater rights for minority groups, the gay and lesbian community, environmental issues, and women's reproductive rights. Furthermore, Liberals are known to raise issues regarding economic inequality as well as displaying a determination to protect social programmes such as Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare (Isserman and Kazin, 2000; Brands, 2001).

seen as the established narratives that surrounded the legitimisation of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009).

Jerry Swenson, a self-described agnostic, found himself in 2001, with time and energy to devote towards activism. Swenson envisaged a group, progressive in nature that would promote peace and alternative careers to young people considering the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programme. Swenson had a history of activism, particularly protesting the Vietnam War from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. Jerry Swenson was a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley during the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964 (J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009). He moved to Moscow in the 1980s and worked at the University of Idaho. On retirement, Swenson notes, he felt more enabled to express his political views in an activist manner (J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009). Along with Pastor Dean Stewart, he felt there was a need to respond to the shift towards a doctrine of pre-emption following September 11, 2001. Both Stewart and Swenson found commonality in their visions of establishing a group to address these issues (D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009; J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009).

The passage through congress of the Patriot Act in 2002 expanded the search and seizure as well as surveillance powers of Federal law enforcement agencies (Etzioni, 2005). It also gave further rise to a growing activist ferment that was resonating in various pockets of the United States (Nichols, 2011). The Moscow-Pullman area was to express such dissent.

The PPC facilitated a broad range of events from community peace walks to documentary screenings of titles such as *Gunner Palace*, *Iraq in Fragments* and *No End in Sight*. Screenings took place at the Kenworthy Performing Arts Centre in downtown Moscow (J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009). Such a venue made selected documentaries readily accessible to the nearby University of Idaho student housing precinct (J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009).

Queller notes that the PPC served as a vehicle for one to express their opposition, in a very personal way, to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. He likened his involvement to 'making a statement that represents his personal moral framework'. Queller also remarked one of the other key reasons for the PPC being an activist



group was to promote oppositional awareness around the aforementioned wars (K. Queller, interview, July 31, 2009).

## **Motivational Factors For Membership**

Queller states, that the motivation that propelled him towards activism was deeply intrinsic in nature (K. Queller, interview, July 31, 2009). Queller desired to demonstrate, outwardly, his opposition to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in an act of alignment to his inner values which saw these wars as being unjust, unnecessary and violent. Queller further states that his actions towards activism were a public manifestation of his deeply rooted Christian beliefs that he states as highlighting the cause of social justice as well as peace. It can be contended, based on Queller's responses vis-à-vis motivation, that his involvement in the PPC gave him a personal outlet for expressionalism (K. Queller, interview, July 31, 2009).

The theme of personal expressionalism was reiterated in several responses in PPC interviews. Jonah Mix, a participant in the PPC peace vigils, states that, intrinsic personal motivational factors drive an individual towards using the outlet of protest. Like Queller's responses, Mix also seeks a group that aligns with his own personal values. (J. Mix, interview, July 29, 2009). This allows the participant to express their individuated beliefs. Mix contends that a group of people, powerfully motivated intrinsically with a desire to express their personal values, can result in the formation of a group that, through synergistic effects<sup>36</sup>, can have greater influence for social change than individuals acting alone (J. Mix, interview, July 29, 2009). Mix's response points towards the view that the locus of control for social change exists within the individual (Scarborough, 1998). From this orientation, an individual can seek to find support to realise the fulfilment of their deeply held and personal beliefs (Kauffman, 1995). In the same sense a group can become a vehicle for people to use to express personal values and to proclaim their individual worldview (Kauffman, 1995).

Linda Rasmussen, a PPC member, sees the route of activism as a means of self-discovery (L. Rasmussen, interview, August 7, 2009). Rasmussen further comments that people who have similar intrinsic motivation are more likely to form a

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<sup>36</sup> Synergy is a term used in many disciplines to describe the effect that occurs when two or more complementary units join together and create an effect larger than can be accounted for by the sum of the individual units (Stumpf, 1999).

group as an outlet for activism (L. Rasmussen, interview, August 7, 2009). This statement further reiterates those of Queller and Mix in that, thematically speaking, individuals with shared intrinsic values can attract together to form groups in which is created a vehicle for greater self-development and personal expression.

Bill Johnson states he was inspired to join the coalition because the group provided him with an outlet to express his outrage towards U.S. military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan (B. Johnson, interview, August 11, 2009). Johnson notes that this opportunity gave him an intrinsic consequence of feeling good because of being able to articulate and publically express his values around the issue. He also describes this process as ‘being a fun and crazy thing to do” (B. Johnson, interview, August 11, 2009). Johnson goes on to state the he views a collective action as stemming from individual self-discovery:

I don't know that social change happens from people wanting to [form a group]I think more probably social change remains an individual self-discovery more than it does from a collective, people just come in as individuals, sort of internal awareness of themselves in relation to everybody and everything else (B. Johnson, interview, August 11, 2009).

Johnson's quote captures a strong individualistic tenor. His comments along with other interviewees as aforementioned tend towards a proclivity for self-discovery and personal expressionalism (Scarborough, 1998). This steers away from classical Socialism as it places the individual as the agent of historical social change rather than a collectivity based on class solidarity.

In classical socialist parlance it is true that people make history but historical agency is achieved through a strong sense of collective identity (Miliband, 1994). This collective identity is born out of shared experiences that are universalistic in nature such as the prevailing material conditions. Through a broad range of readings on Socialist Movements, it becomes apparent that a strong sense of solidarity is born from the shared class experiences of operant material realities. Epstein (1990) points out, whilst drawing upon Inglehart's (1990) post-material paradigm, that the advent of relative economic security in recent human history has confused class distinctions and therefore has resulted in weakened class identification. Therborn (2007) has also noted that class distinctions and identification has been devitalised.

The PPC respondents do not point towards a coherent sense of universalistic agency and solidarity based collectivism. From the classical socialist point of view,

collectivism promotes co-operation, solidarity and a coherent economic and social analysis coupled with an ideology of historical materialism. So self-development, in this context, is a goal one can only truly pursue once alienating and oppressive structures have been overcome (Alway, 1995; Adams, 2003; Lerner, 1992; Miliband, 1994). To this extent, classical socialism promotes an emancipatory vision which postulates a future in which people can be free from structures that alienate and are then able to fully realise their human potential. In short, self-discovery can be seen as an inevitable outcome of this emancipatory vision (Alway, 1995; Adams, 2003; Lerner, 1992; Miliband, 1994).

An example of one of the supporters the PPC attracted was Jonah Mix. His participation in the PPC peace vigils came out of a concern for society and the community at large<sup>37</sup>. Jonah Mix states that the vigils gave him a platform to express his personal feelings towards the Afghanistan and Iraq war:

I don't think we have the right to go into other countries and be dictators or put democracy above anyone. I just think that the war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan [are] both good examples of the US military overstepping itself and not doing what I think they were originally set out to do, which [is] to protect the nation from eminent attack (J. Mix, interview, July 29 2009).

Jonah Mix further elaborates:

I believe that every individual has the right to self ownership. That you own yourself. Then, you're completely in control of yourself. And freedom is the right to control yourself and all you are in the way that you choose, so long as it doesn't interfere with someone else's right to do the same (J. Mix, interview, July 29, 2009).

Jonah Mix's statement on self ownership can be categorised as being highly individualistic. In fact, one could argue that his responses draw upon several themes pertained to a Hartzian analysis of classic American Liberalism (Hartz, 1955). For example Mix's locus of control is very much situated in the rationality of the individual with a strong underlay of what could be termed as 'self-determination'. Moreover, it echoes the individualistic themes embedded throughout American social history of the individual seeking to exercise rational self-determination and personal freedom.

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<sup>37</sup> Eric Hobsawm (1992) describes this as 'ideological confusion' as libertarians typically do not emphasize values relating to community and collective action.

In a sense, the pursuit of personal freedom and expressionalism is an individualistic journey often detached from family institutions and the wider community.

Perhaps this is not uncommon in the contemporary nature of postmodern politics as laid out by Adams (2003). Adams (2003) states, that the great ideological positions of liberalism, socialism and conservatism, have become eclectic in nature. These ideologies according to Adams (2003) are said to be no longer universalistic. In a broad sense, postmodernism is defined as a posture in which universalism gives way in a space where fluidity and contingency hold greater relevance (Adams, 2003; Kauffman, 1995). Therefore, one can hold an eclectic array of beliefs which are self-serving and expressionist in nature (Adams, 2003; Butler, 2002; Hutcheon, 2002; Meiksins-Wood, 1995). For example, one can hold a Leftist position espousing collectivism and cooperation on the one hand, but correspondingly the individual can also hold a strong liberal conception of the self which analytically at least steers away from collectivism and socialist values of cooperation, cohesion and class consciousness. A contemporary and arguably postmodern/post-material emphasis on fluidity and a style of 'group of individuals' based collectivism is apparent through the case studies sees the individual gravitate towards small scale ideologies that are characteristic of the new social movements (Adams, 2003; Kauffman, 2005; Hutcheon, 2002; Johnston, 1994). In short, small scale ideologies are concerned with single issue identity politics. For example, an individual can be concerned about foreign policy issues and hold a very broad, personalised set of communitarian values (Adams, 2003; Kaffman, 2005). It can be drawn from these contemporary developments that self-identification has therefore become more important than a coherent traditional or socialist Leftist predisposition concerning American activism (Adams, 2003; Kauffman, 2005; Hutcheon, 2002).

Travis Bushmann-Mason a University of Idaho student, an ardent supporter of American Progressive values, was attracted to the peace vigils to protest the Iraq War. As a student of Journalism and a frequent blogger on progressive issues he believed that showing an activist proclivity towards U.S. foreign policy as being fundamental to his rights as a United States citizen. Bushmann-Mason comes from Richmond in the San Francisco Bay area. He came to UI after spending a year at the University of Alaska. Bushmann-Mason identifies himself strongly as being a Democratic Liberal; at UI, he was a member of the Young Democrats. Bushmann-

Mason has joined in several of the Palouse Peace Coalition's (PPC) activities but most notably for him the Friday night peace vigils at Friendship Square. In answer to the question of what his personal commitment to the group was, Bushmann-Mason stated that it was an easy-on, easy-off type of involvement at UI. His attendance, he points out, has been very intermittent at his time at UI. Bushmann-Mason outlines how he was kept informed of the PPC's upcoming activities.

It was a sort of diverse group, young or old, some college students, professors, you know. It's just you show up, you say you want peace... You sign yourself up on this email list, and get notification on when the next vigils were or discussions... You wouldn't get kicked off if you didn't [go]. (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009)

On the political spectrum, Bushmann-Mason believes the PPC was fairly diverse in ideological terms and the people that it attracted.

I'm pretty sure there wasn't anyone who was strongly conservative there. I think it definitely ran the spectrum for the rest of the way, you know, from the moderate centre Left Democrats to people like me who are pretty far out on the Left of the Democratic Party. And [there's] probably 2 or 4 [people] that are further up to the Left than me. (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009).

Bushmann-Mason states that the PPC position on the Iraq war would not be out of step with some people on the Right, particularly Libertarians<sup>38</sup>.

It's pretty hydrogenous, there're a lot of things with the Iraq war issue that even people on the Right would agree with. (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009).

He indicates, however, that he believes in the group's purpose principles and its desire to raise awareness, more specifically, on American foreign policy relating to Iraq and Afghanistan.

I really believe the war in Iraq and on Iraq is unjust. Actually, it's normally from a sort of utilitarian sense of, it's a waste of money,

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<sup>38</sup> Well-known Libertarians, such as Republican Congress man Ron Paul, have stated their opposition to the Iraq war. Ron Paul stated in the Republican primaries for the 2008 presidential election, "if the goal of government is to be the policeman of the world, you lose liberty." (Ivie and Giner, 2009). Furthermore, Paul went on to contend that the defence of American liberty necessitated a minimisation of federal government. Moreover, he argued that the use of the PATRIOT Act for warrantless detention and by ignoring habeas corpus, was in his mind, an attack on liberty itself (Ivie and Giner, 2009).

waste of American life, it's a waste of, you know, our tax payer dollars. (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009).

Bushmann-Mason was very sceptical regarding George W. Bush's foreign policy. He asserts that the Bush Administration conducted its foreign policy in a haphazard manner.

So much of the war in Iraq was predicated on this stupidity... Post 9/11, we're unified together and there is no dissent and anybody who says otherwise is a traitor. (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009).

Bushmann-Mason is not a proponent of nation-building, and believes the United States had no legal right to conduct regime change in Iraq in 2003 (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009). It is the events of Iraq in particular that motivate Bushmann-Mason to join the PPC vigils when he can. Bushmann-Mason points out that he would like to have been more involved, predominantly in the peace vigils, but found his university schedule especially busy. He was highly involved as a journalist for UI student newspaper, *The Argonaut*. He also believes his thoughts and participation in the PPC peace vigils build upon a historic American legacy of dissent. He noted that in the mainstream media and public opinion, opposition to America's foreign policy in the Middle East was largely seen as unpatriotic. Bushmann-Mason believes that such categorisation is un-American in its essence.

If you speak out against this war, you're really not an American, you know, that was the media; that was the cultural paradigm. Gee, if you disagree with the president, you're not American. To me, that was probably the most profoundly un-American idea that can be, because America is a country that was founded on dissent. (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009).

Bushmann-Mason places high value on freedom of speech and civil liberties as also articulated by Inglehart (1997) as being descriptive of a post-material value set. Freedom of speech is inherently expressive and personal in nature. For an individual to highlight freedom as an important value it can be argued that the freedom to express freely personal opinions and values must be seen as important. The fact that Bushmann-Mason places an emphasis on the importance of freedom of speech and civil liberties rather than materialist values such as economic security and law and order for example would suggest that Bushmann-Mason is more

oriented to self- expressional end of the spectrum. That is not to say that those of a materialist sense or orientation, who are Americans, would not cherish freedom of speech or civil liberties. According to Inglehart's (1997) post-material construct generational cohorts brought up in relative economic security have a tendency to place greater importance on quality of life issues. Bushmann-Mason also notes in his interview responses that is a passionate about the environment. He believes that preservation of the environment is highly important to the community as it is an issue of sustainability which will affect future generations. Bushmann-Mason stresses that dissent is an integral part of expressing freedom.

“There is no freedom unless you have the freedom to talk about doing something. Ultimately, that is the freedom that leads to all others. You know, you can have the freedom to act; if you don't have the freedom to speak about the action, who is going to know the action is going to happen?” (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009).

Bushmann-Mason stresses that dissent is an integral part of expressing freedom of speech. He argues, as a journalist, that the freedom to pass comment and to raise issues is paramount to a citizen's self-expression. Bushmann-Mason believes that dissent does not just emanate from advocacy journalism, but also from the everyday citizen. He comments on the issue of dissent as related to the Bush presidency and the Iraq war.

“Freedom is meaningless if it's not used... And I guess this ties back into [what] we were talking about earlier on in the war of Iraq, and the things the peace vigil was protesting against... You know, the media lined up behind Bush... If you spoke out against this, if you were publicly against it, you're a traitor or crazy.” (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009).

Universalist ideologies, such as Socialism have now been exchanged for new social movement micro-politic stances that emphasise personal identity and the contingent self (Adams, 2003; Kauffman, 2005; Hutcheon, 2002). This Thesis has continually reiterated the importance of NSMs to the American politic landscape. The connection between NSMs in an atomisation of American Leftist descent concerning foreign policy cannot be overstated. NSMs draw upon small scale, identity politics that in a broad sense encapsulate postmodern themes of fluidity, particularism and eclecticism (Adams, 2003; Hutcheon, 2002; Kauffman, 2005). This thesis is not

concerned with polemical analysis of postmodernism within new social movements. These two respective political and social currents are used in a broad sense that seeks to explain and encapsulate a *zeitgeist* (a particular set of assumptions that creates the mood of an era). In a broad sense, this Thesis situates this *zeitgeist* in a time and political space of the two selected case studies. Social change, in a post-material and postmodern sense, emanates from an individual attaining consciousness through continual and contingent self-development interacting with an eclectic array of stimulus. In other words, this paradigm trends towards personalism that is based on a non-essentialist fluidity of identity (Adams, 2003; Epstein, 1996; Hutcheon, 2002; Kauffman, 2005).

Palouse Peace Coalition interviewees commented that the PPC was a group of members that behaved and engaged with group activities on an autonomous basis (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009; S. McGehee, interview, July 29 2009; J. Mix, interview, July 29, 2009; D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009; J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009; K. Queller, interview, July 19, 2009). The PPC is also an organisation progressive in nature in championing other causes cherished by the contemporary American Left. These issues ranged from Fair Trade and anti-globalisation, environmental sustainability and support for greater civil liberties (J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009). Overall, many of the interviewees possess a critique of the military-industrial complex which is characteristic of the American Left critique of U.S. foreign policy and its view of its institutional sensibility. As well as some aspects of the free market economic system (T. Bushmann-Mason, interview, July 22, 2009; D. Stewart, interview, July 31, 2009; J. Swenson, interview, August 11, 2009; K. Queller, interview, July 19, 2009). None of the PPC respondents articulated a classical socialist critique. Their critique was based on their zeal to critique to draw attention to the perceived inadequacies of American policies relating to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Many of the respondents drew upon a broad connection between U.S. foreign policy and the military-industrial complex. This conception was never fully elaborated and articulated in an analytical and coherent manner. The conception was referred to in a broad manner that implicitly indicates a discourse representative of state and corporate collaboration concerning the operation of American foreign policy (Mills, 1956; Bone 1977).



This was reminiscent of the American New Left in the 1960s, which made similar pronouncements by drawing on the work of American sociologists C. Wright Mills (Lader, 1979; Bacciocco, 1974). It could be argued on parameters New Left group indicators, as laid out previously, that many of the respondents resonated New Left cultural themes. Also, as previously noted, New Leftist sentiment eschews class as the agency of social change and points towards the growth of the individual into personal consciousness as being the agency for change (Bone, 1977; Lader, 1979). As a consequence it became infused with a postmodern sensibility of a fluid self-constructed identity. This constructed identity is not defined as being constructed formed from historical materialism but rather relativism in the space of an individual's inner experience interacting with the outer environment in a feedback loop. Thus, giving way for on-going contingent identity formation (Butler, 2002; Hutcheon, 2002).

Former Washington State University political scientist and current (as of 2009) PPC activist, Dr. McGehee comments on the decentralised and ad hoc nature of the PPC:

The organization, in my opinion, had a lack of structure, a lot of people felt it was good that we didn't need any real authority structure at all in the group. And that carried over to fundraising, the same thing, if we needed money, we would hold a fundraiser and raise the money. And it's worked, its carried things on. (S. McGehee, interview, July 29 2009)

McGehee also points to an NSM paradigm which emphasises consensus style decision making processes: "There was always a sense... that everything had to be by consensus. Everything was thumbs up, thumbs down or sideways. On vote, even if there was a single thumb, whatever the proposal, was voted out" (S. McGehee, interview, July 29 2009). As previously noted, Tarrow (1998) posits that groups who share these NSM structural characteristics often find difficulty in defining clear objectives and mission statements due to inconclusive consensus-building processes. This is evidenced by the PPC's proclivity towards promoting autonomous action.

Jerry Swenson, one of the founders of the PPC, was deeply influenced by the Vietnam War. His opposition to the Vietnam War, in his time studying at the University of California at Berkeley, according to Swenson, shaped his personal identity as well as providing him with a political ferment that was predisposed towards him raising an oppositional voice to U.S. foreign policy. This consciousness

provoked an awareness that sought to challenge established thinking on U.S. foreign policy, both held by governmental and media elites, as well as popular public consensus on various foreign policy issues. Swenson states that his life has been a 'do-it-yourself biography'. He comments that looking back over his life and his activities with the PPC and a whole other host of groups he has started, that his life has been an exciting adventure.

Pastor Dean Stewart notes that his life consists of a proclivity towards the transidental. Stewart believes in science but points out that science cannot explain many aspects of one's social existence in a universalistic manner. He further elaborates that although his faith has acted as something of a guiding principle in his life, it has been articulated through experiences that have helped give continuing redefinition to his identity and this points towards a contingent postmodern view of the self (Epstein, 1996). Stewart notes that he does not subscribe to a binary view of life. His view of faith allows him to incorporate new understandings and derive meanings into shaping his identity. This view of identity demonstrates a proclivity to equivocate pointing to the many nuances that shape a person's sense of identity built through experience.

Jill Maxwell, member of the PPC, notes that her participation has varied over the years. Living in a rural area, she says that the distance to travel to Friendship Square in order to protest prohibits her involvement. She also states that the PPC is a group that promotes individual autonomy, is easy-on and easy-off in terms of membership, and is decentralised in terms of its structures. Maxwell further elaborates that she believes there is a core group of people who essentially keep the PPC going. Jill Maxwell further articulates a postmodern sensibility when noting that she does not subscribe to any universalistic ideologies. Maxwell states that her life has not been guided by any conventional social narratives and her lifestyle has been fashioned by her own individual preferences that point towards a narrative that derives meaning from an intrinsically based sense of herself. Maxwell strongly asserts that she feels no outside pressure as a guiding light to her life philosophy (J. Maxwell, interview, August 9 2009).

## Conclusion

Have the rise of postmodernism and the New Social Movements essentially undermined and 'individuated' the traditionally collectivist American Left? It does seem clear that the American Left has become atomised and has migrated away from collectivism to what appears to be a postmodern sensibility, placing ever greater emphasis on self development and individuality. This has been evident for some time as the diffusion of the New Social Movements from the 1970s onwards has seen the Left fragment into single issue groups. These groups have placed a greater emphasis on culture than economic materialism. The Left has a strong tradition of challenging the validity of the prevailing economic system that facilitates disparity and impoverishment. The American Left's proclivity for embracing cultural issues has seen it lose what political vitality it once had.

The American Left has apparently retreated into forms of localism, issues pertaining to municipalities, the academy, or the arts. Also, the Left has had a visible presence through single-issue platforms such as: the environmental movement, the anti-nuclear movement, gay and lesbian rights and the feminist movement, to name but a few. Conservatism, in contrast, has been on the march, bound by what appears to be an essentialist vision for American society. Neo-liberals have strongly espoused free market doctrines from a fundamentalist perspective. Neoconservatives have advocated a vision for U.S. foreign policy based on "American values" and the projection of the Liberal "Democratic" project. Neoconservatives, too, possess a fundamentalist ardour. Despite contrary evidence to the success of the implementation of their project, especially during the first term of the George W. Bush's presidency, Neoconservatives, the "Neocons", neither equivocated nor retracted their policy aggressive and bellicose prescriptions. The American Left, by contrast, has found itself perpetually in defensive mode. Generally speaking, American leftists are supporters of the U.S. Democratic Party. The trajectory of the Democratic Party may be seen as having advocated for the cultural Left on the fringes of its social policy platform. However, few voices that espouse traditional Leftist values remain in its ranks. The most prominent of the unabashedly leftist 'survivors' in prominent positions include Senator Bernie Sanders, and writers Alexander Cockburn and Naomi Klein, to name a few. The American Left, however,

may be showing new signs of life. In 2011 two significant movements occurred and remain on-going.

Occupy Wall Street is indisputably the most active protest movement in the U.S. today, and has quickly spread far beyond North America. However, just prior to this, recall elections that removed prominent conservative politicians were seen, in context, as unexpected shifts in the American political spectrum. In early 2011, Republican Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker passed legislation that drastically cut public sector collective bargaining rights. This sparked a massive public outcry as literally tens of thousands of people marched on the Wisconsin state capital, Madison. The Wisconsin Union movement was revived with a new vitality and it successfully organised a recall vote which removed two Republican State Senators. Further efforts are currently underway to recall Governor Scott Walker.

Occupy Wall Street sprung into prominence on September 17<sup>th</sup> 2011. This movement spread throughout the United States as a movement that occupied public spaces in New York, Chicago, Seattle, Oakland, San Francisco to name but a few of the dozens of cities throughout America that were involved in this mass movement. The Occupy Movement had resonance with a mass of people as it highlighted the growing inequality between the wealthiest top 1% and the rest of the population. The Occupy Movement is focused around issues relating to economic disparities. It is indisputably a significant development for the American Left, if only because the emphasis has now been placed on economic and material conditions rather than on individualised cultural issues. At this juncture, it is too early to tell whether the Occupy Movement can organise itself into a coherent political force. Perhaps given the right direction it can organise itself into an American leftist version of the Right wing “Tea Party” and take over a significant section of the Democratic Party itself.

Both the CCA and the PPC demonstrated proclivities toward self expression and individuality in their resistance to U.S. foreign policy. This is not peculiar to the contemporary American Left, which for more than 40 years has operated in a manner that has sought to revolutionise society through cultural issues. The American Right, on the other hand, has emphasised that the key to changing the United States’ capitalist system has been through a free market system. Both perspectives allowed considerable scope for participants to express their individuality. The respondents to our surveys in Moscow, Idaho, indicated that their organisational structures were run

in decentralised, non-hierarchical ways. This helped to facilitate an expression of individuality in protesting the conflicts in Central America.

Traditionally, classical socialism can be underscored by some well-articulated tenets. Broadly speaking, socialism emphasises collectivism, cooperation, equality, and perhaps most importantly an economic materialist vision which is emancipatory in nature. For a contemporary social movement located on the Left this would indicate critique of existing capitalist structures within the context of a Liberal democracy.

The context in which the CCA and the PPC conducted their foreign policy protests was in a political space, as previously alluded to, that was very much to the right in comparison to the leftism of other countries in the Western World. The United States, in championing both the neoliberal project and discourse throughout not only the Western World but the Developing World also, can be seen to have had a compartmentalising effect on social communities and thus created a greater tendency towards individualistic behaviours and mores.

In both activist groups, individualistic behaviours and values, and responses reflective of postmodern views, were exemplified in a number of ways by the participants. The participants in both groups indicated that participation in the activism was non-binding and allowed the individual freedom to participate according to their particular level of ability and will. The identity of the individual seemed to predominate. The CCA possessed a core group who regarded their commitment to activism as a key priority in their lives. A distinctive feature of both the CCA and PPC was a commitment to work within the structures of the U.S. political system, albeit sometimes on the margins. A characteristic of both activist groups was that they were bound together by a loose connectivity, a *qualified* collectivism, often more reflective of cooperation. According to Butler (1998), American Leftist movements who offer a cultural critique and champion a single-issue cause that may be described as playing a part in 'identity politics'. He stresses that these are nevertheless legitimate parts of the American Left.

What was perhaps most distinctive of the CCA and PPC was that both activist groups would often articulate motivational factors and views of social change in an individualistic manner, tempered with a critique of capitalism in a way that had no clear, coherent theoretical analysis. This indistinct form of analysis steers these two

groups away from a classically socialist interpretation of U.S. economic, political and social institutions. The themes that emerged carried with them a resonance of New Left concerns of the 1960s, as well as New Social Movement themes articulated in the 1970s. These themes revolved around calls for greater democratic participation in political decision-making. Arguments were also expressed that were reminiscent of C. Wright Mills' articulation of the cooperation and coordination of significant elites in U.S. government and society. Mills states that power elites such as the government, military, corporations and universities have interlocking relationships of reciprocity and, by their nature, look to expand their roles in society (Mills, 1956). Many of the CCA respondents pointed to this conceptualisation of power elites. They also echoed the New Left's critique and concern with the military industrial complex. Many of the interviewees elucidated a desire for greater democratic participation within their liberal democracy. The CCA steered away from direct action tactics that could be seen as being confrontational by both political authorities and the wider public.

Many participants, then, touched on themes that were intrinsic to the cause of social justice. However, this was seldom articulated as being directly linked to economic or material conditions. Most of the CCA and the PPC respondents strongly echoed individualistic themes *vis-à-vis* motivational influences and personal views in the agency of social change. The themes contained within the respondents' transcripts that most closely linked to individualism, behaviourally and intrinsically, were concepts of self-discovery and growing self-awareness through the journey implied by participation in activism, and this clearly placed the locus of social change with the individual, rather than bound to a grand, essentialist and universalistic narrative.

This aligns with postmodern conceptualisations, as elucidated for example by Adams (2002) and Kauffman (1995), both of whom point to a contemporary paradigm in which individuals practise identitarianism, which is fluid and contingent in nature. Such identitarianism seems to be evident in our examinations of the transcripts of many of the CCA and PPC respondents. Indeed, many respondents felt a sense of personal journey through their activist experiences. Those who had a history of activism expressed feelings of continuity with their past in their interactions with the CCA's and PPC's activities. It can also be observed, when viewed through

the lens of postmodern theory, that such respondents experienced a fluid and contingent sense of self in relation to interactions and experiences within the realm of CCA and PPC activities. In a theoretical sense one can observe an intrinsic feedback loop of biographical and personal identity interacting contingently with the personal realities of their experiences with the CCA and the PPC, thus allowing space and scope for a sense of intrinsic personal development and growth. In the final analysis, this unexpectedly aligns with Inglehart's (1997) outline of post-material values, and especially the key indicators that he finds, most of which revolve around quality-of-life issues.

In regards to the CCA and the PPC two decades later, self-development and personal growth remained central motivational factors, placing them well within the realm of post-materialism, and hence individualism. Whether the pendulum is now swinging back toward a more collectivised leftism in the United States, with "occupy" movements and a pervasive economic depression, looking to the recent past, the CCA and the PPC were clearly atomised and autonomous assemblages of postmodern individuals. In examining the central research question, "have the rise of postmodernism and the New Social Movements essentially undermined and 'individuated' the traditionally collectivist American Left?" the case studies provided a strident response, perhaps foreshadowing the end of collectivist, ideological leftism in the United States.

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