Rothermere American Institute

RAI News

Hilary 2004

University of Oxford

Academic Programme

Transatlantic Dialogues in Public Policy

The RAI is pleased to announce a series of lectures and discussions that will engage with a variety of important questions of public policy. Since many policy trends cross the Atlantic (in both directions), it is envisaged that this series will create and maintain an open dialogue between the USA and Britain about mutual policy concerns. The series will also facilitate a sharing of expertise and promote greater transatlantic understanding. Each individual dialogue will involve an exchange between a prominent US-based speaker and a UK-based speaker of similar standing. The speakers will all be experts in policy-making, and many of them will have practical policy-making experience.

The first dialogue in the series will take place at the RAI on Thursday 29 April at 4.30 pm. In this opening dialogue, Robert Reich, Professor of Social and Economic Policy, Brandeis University and former Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, and Richard Sennett, Professor of Sociology, The London School of Economics and Political Science will address 'Work and Welfare in the 21st Century.' The discussion will be chaired by Professor Jane Lewis, Barnet Professor of Social Policy, University of Oxford.

The second dialogue is scheduled for Monday 10 May, 4.30 pm at the RAI. Sidney Blumenthal, Senior Advisor to the President in the Clinton White House and author of *The Clinton Wars*, and Matthew Taylor, Senior Policy Adviser in the Prime Minister's Policy Directorate and former head of the IPPR, will discuss 'Politics, Policy and the Press'.

Other dialogues being planned for 2004 include 'Housing the Homeless' and 'Regulating Reproductive Health'. The series is being co-sponsored by the American Embassy in London. The dialogues are free and open to the public.

Yale Castle Lectures

The RAI is to be the UK venue for a series of three lectures that RAI Fellow Richard Sennett will give this spring at Yale University. In the series, titled 'The Culture of the New Capitalism', Professor Sennett will reflect on the production of culture in modern society. He will examine why, in a 'developed world' awash with material objects, people are not very skilled at understanding what these objects reveal about themselves or one another. The three lectures: 'Work', 'Talent' and 'Consumer' will take place at 5.00 pm on 4, 11 and 18 May respectively. The lectures are free and open to the public.

US Embassy Sponsors Speaker on US Elections

On Thursday 20 May at 5.00 pm, Allan J Lichtman will give a lecture titled 'Who Will Be the Next President of the United States?' Dr Lichtman is Professor of History at American University in Washington, DC. He is the author or co-author of six books, including *The Thirteen Keys to the Presidency* and *The Keys to the White House*. He has appeared as a commentator on many television networks worldwide, and served as a CBS News consultant during the impeachment and trial of Bill Clinton. Dr Lichtman's lecture is free and open to the public.

Human Rights Conference

The RAI is sponsoring a conference, 'The United States and Global Human Rights' (11–13 November 2004). The question of America's historic relationship to global human rights is one full of ambiguities. The conference seeks paper proposals examining the legal, historical, cultural and political relationship of the US to the emergence of the human rights norm in the 20th century. Slavoj Zizek will be one of the plenary speakers. For more information and the call for papers, please see the RAI website.

Richard Ford to give Harmsworth Lecture

Richard Ford will be giving the Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in Arts and Letters on Tuesday 8 June at 5.00 pm. Richard Ford has won much acclaim for his fiction about contemporary American life, including *The Sportswriter* (1986) and *Independence Day* (1995). For the latter novel, Ford received both a PEN/Faulkner Award and the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, making him the first writer to win both awards for a single work. Entitled 'The Things That Help, The Things That Hurt: A Memoir' (referring to Henry James's preface to *What Maisie Knew*), the lecture will take place at 5.00 pm in the Gulbenkian Theatre, St Cross Building, Manor Road, Oxford. Richard Ford will be introduced by Tom Paulin, and the lecture will be followed by a reception on the lawn outside the RAI. Both events are free and open to the public, and you are warmly invited to attend.

Also under the auspices of the Harmsworth fund, Hilary term saw visits to the RAI by Jean Chothia (Cambridge University) and Christopher Bigsby (University of East Anglia), who gave lectures and classes for undergraduate and graduate students studying American Drama. Dr Chothia spoke on Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams, while Professor Bigsby talked about Arthur Miller and David Mamet.

Books published

Trevor McCrisken (Postdoctoral Fellow, 2001–03) *American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam: US foreign policy since 1974,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

James B Bell (Visiting Scholar, 2003) *The Imperial Origins of the King's Church in Early America, 1607-1783,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

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Visit by US Embassy Minister

On 25th February the RAI had the pleasure of hosting a visit by the new Deputy Chief of Mission to the US Embassy, David Johnson, and other Embassy officials. Following some opening remarks by the Minister there was an informal roundtable discussion on current events with Fellows from the RAI and Faculty members. Mr Johnson then went on to see the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Colin Lucas, and finished his visit with dinner and discussion at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies.

David T Johnson arrived in London on 4 August 2003 to assume his duties as the new Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy. The Minister, whose home state is Georgia, entered the US Foreign Service in 1977. Before his arrival in London, he served as the Afghan Coordinator for the US.

The US Embassy is sponsoring the series, 'Transatlantic Dialogues in Public Policy' and a lecture by Professor Allan Lichtman.

Lincoln Prize

Richard Carwardine, Rhodes Professor of American History and member of the RAI Academic Committee, was awarded the 14th annual Lincoln Prize for his analytical biography, *Lincoln* (2003). The book combines the earliest original sources and the latest historical scholarship and presents a fresh perspective on Abraham Lincoln's political career and achievements. The narrative portrays him as a skilful politician endowed with a strong moral foundation, whose religious convictions helped him to frame – and justify – his decision to wage the war to preserve the Union and end slavery. Professor Carwardine is the first British scholar to win the prize, which is awarded for work on the era of the American Civil War.

'I take great pleasure in winning this year's Lincoln Prize, the foremost award in American nineteenth-century history,' said Professor Carwardine. 'It is the greatest accolade that an American Civil War historian could receive, and it is especially gratifying that the judges thought that a non-American had something fresh to say about one of the most written-about presidents of the United States. I am delighted that the RAI and the Modern History Faculty are implicitly associated with this award. It is a pleasing tribute to the maturity of American historical scholarship in Britain generally, and in Oxford in particular.'

Money and Migration after Globalisation

The RAI was co-sponsor of a conference organised by Professor Nigel Thrift in the Life and Environmental Sciences Division entitled, 'Money and Migration after Globalisation'. Other sponsors of this event were the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the US Social Science Research Council (SSRC). The delegates came from a wide variety of academic institutions in the UK and the USA, including Warwick, Edinburgh, Chicago, Berkeley and Columbia universities. Topics discussed at the colloquium included Governance, Flows, Money and Mobility, and Taking Forward International Collaboration.

Fellows' News

- Sebastian Cody chaired a panel session on 'The Presidential Primary Season' at the British Library for the 'Elections on the Horizon: Marketing Politics to the Electorate in the USA and UK' conference. This one-day meeting on 15 March was hosted by the Eccles Centre for American Studies and Haworth Press Series in Political Marketing.
- Sarah Emsley (Postdoctoral Fellow, 2002–04) will take up a position as Assistant Professor in the Expository Writing programme at Harvard University on 1 July.
- Paul Giles spoke on 'National Culture and the Spectre of Globalisation' in a joint seminar with David Morley of Goldsmith's College, London on 20 March as part of the Institute of United States Studies, University of London seminar on American Literature and Culture. He also spoke at Columbia University, New York on 2 April at a conference entitled 'Thinking Social/National Formations: American Studies and Ethnic Studies Encounters.' His essay 'Transnationalism and Classic American Literature' *(PMLA,* January 2003*)* was awarded an honorable mention for the William Riley Parker prize by the Modern Language Association of America. This prize is awarded annually for the best essay in *PMLA* and it is the first time anyone outside North America has been cited for the award.
- Godfrey Hodgson participated in an online forum on the Democratic presidential nomination 'After Iowa and New Hampshire' run by AllLearn on 29/30 January. Other participants included: David Brady, Stanford University; John Lapinski, Yale University; Earl Black, Rice University; and Peter Feaver, Duke University. AllLearn is a joint venture by the Universities of Oxford, Stanford and Yale to provide non-credit distance learning programmes.

Visiting Fellows

Annette Jael Lehmann, Assitant Professor of Comparative Literature and Media Studies, Free University Berlin, Germany, will be joining the RAI in May as a Visiting Fellow. Professor Lehmann's research project will be 'Images and Visions: Perspectives on 19th-Century American Visual Culture'.

Professor Mary King, Senior Fellow, RAI 2004. Interview on page 2

An interview with Mary Elizabeth King

Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, University for Peace of the United Nations (UPEACE), Costa Rica; Senior Fellow RAI, 2004

Can you give us a sense of your career history?

'As Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at UPEACE I wear several hats. I serve as an academic adviser to the Africa Programme, teach graduate students in the gender and peace building department, and advise the Rector on a variety of issues. I also spend time in Africa, and have just returned from a workshop in Abuja, Nigeria where we brought together academicians from Nigeria and throughout Western Africa to develop a curriculum on peace and conflict studies. I work on many of the most nettlesome predicaments of our contemporary era – ethnic and religious conflict, settlements of disputes, and the connections between gendered identities and peace. In addition, I have been given the honor of being Distinguished Scholar with The American University Center for Global Peace, in Washington, DC. This allows me to work with US-based colleagues, who are concerned with the same complex issues.

Prior to my professorship at UPEACE, I was a professor at St George's University in Grenada, West Indies, where I had the chance to explore Distance Learning strategies for universities with few books. You could say that I have been a practitioner of international relations for twenty-five years or more. My work has required personal contact with heads of state and government, and ministers of government from approximately 120 developing countries.

During the Carter Administration, I was a presidential appointee, confirmed by the US Senate, and had worldwide responsibility for the Peace Corps (then in 60 countries), VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and other national volunteer service corps programs. Since 1984, I have continued to serve as a special adviser on the Middle East to former president Jimmy Carter. I joined the small team working to get Jimmy Carter into the White House during dark days in the Nixon era. I had been part of the Johnson Administration's 'War on Poverty,' where I developed neighborhood health centers for poverty-stricken parts of the US. That was when I met my husband, Dr Peter G Bourne, now a fellow at Green College.

As a young graduate from Ohio Wesleyan University, I was privileged to have been able to work alongside the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King, Jr (no relation) in the US civil rights movement, certainly the greatest moral encounter in the US of the twentieth century. I was a member of the small but powerful staff of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), who worked for $9.64 a week to organise voter registration campaigns throughout the Deep South. The four years that I spent working in Georgia, Southside Virginia, and Mississippi were the most formative experiences of my life. This was the start of my lifelong study of the history of nonviolent resistance. My memoir of my experiences, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement*, won me a Robert F Kennedy Memorial Book Award in 1988.

My latest book is *Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr: The Power of Nonviolent Action*, which concerns nine contemporary nonviolent struggles. It was commissioned by UNESCO and published in Paris in 1999. It was brought out in a second edition by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in New Delhi, India, in 2002.

The American historian Ruth Rosen has called me a central figure in starting the contemporary US women's movement. I will add a few words on this chapter of my life. Discussions among several women staff in the student wing of the US civil rights movement were raging during the mid-1960s. Before the term feminism had been coined, I and my colleague Sandra Cason (Casey Hayden), also on SNCC staff, wrote a manifesto entitled 'Sex and Caste', which we circulated to 44 women in the peace and justice movements in the US. It was published in *Liberation* magazine of the War Resisters League in 1966, and is now viewed as prompting the consciousness-raising groups of the 1970s.

My doctorate in international politics is from the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. In 2003, I was given the Jamnalal Bajaj International Award, instituted in commemoration of the birth centenary of Jamnalal Bajaj, an industrialist who was Gandhi's silent financial backer. The prize recognises the promotion of Gandhian values outside India. In perhaps the greatest honor of my life, I received the prize at a special event in Mumbai (Bombay), India, and thus joined the ranks of such previous winners as Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu of South Africa, Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Sir Joseph Rotblat of the UK and Professor Johan Galtung of Norway.'

What is the background to your project?

'During the twentieth century, a political form of fighting emerged as a coherent alternative to military strategies. One probably cannot write of the twentieth century without considering Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Alternative ways of 'waging conflict' developed. Something else occurred in the twentieth century, according to the British military strategist Stephen King-Hall: peoples will no longer accept occupation. In the past, if a nation were defeated at war, the population generally accepted defeat. This no longer the case.

The parameters of nonviolent resistance for the US civil rights movement of the 1960s were established by the Montgomery bus boycott, and these were explicitly derived from Gandhi. For decades prior to the emergence of the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King, Jr in the boycott, African-American leaders had travelled to India to meet with Gandhi, and learn how to link the moral qualities of nonviolence with his techniques for social and political struggle. During the 1930s in particular, a steady stream of black college presidents, professors, pastors and journalists spent time in India, studying how to forge mass struggle with nonviolent means. Once the Montgomery bus boycott started in 1955, tutors – seasoned professionals who had been to India and studied the theories and methods of nonviolent struggle – met with King in nightly sessions, teaching him the insights of Gandhi. They plied him with books and persuaded King to put down his gun, which his church trustees had obliged him to carry.

Among the black leaders who had traveled to India were James Farmer (whose papers are in the Vere Harmsworth library), the Reverend James Lawson, and Bayard Rustin. Dr King's teachers were James Lawson and Bayard Rustin, both of whom had studied in India. And, I, as a young white woman still in my early twenties, was taught the complexities of fighting for social justice nonviolently by Lawson and Rustin. Dr King, like everyone else, had to study a way of struggling for human rights that attacks the power of the adversary, but not the person, well being, or life of the opponent.

Since then, the wisdom derived from Gandhi's experiments and King's amplification of these insights has been employed by any number of peoples and popular movements. Using methods such as boycotts, demonstrations and strikes, nonviolent movements against totalitarian bureaucracies and despotic regimes have brought about social and political change in East Germany, the Czech Republic and elsewhere. A transformation succeeded in the Balkans in 2000, when a nonviolent organisation brought down the Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic with methods of political non-cooperation such as civil disobedience. As a result of the contemporary use of nonviolent struggle, military manuals, political lexicons and world maps have had to be revised.

As Gandhi has influenced other movements, other struggles affected him. At least 235 books have been documented as works that he studied in his lifetime, probably an underestimation. Last November, I pondered the range of Gandhi's books, at the house where he stayed whenever he was in Bombay (Mumbai). Scholars know that even during his early years in South Africa, Gandhi was aware of nonviolent struggles in China, Bengal and Russia. He acknowledged the influence of Henry David Thoreau, particularly his insistence that unjust laws must be rejected. Yet the literature on nonviolent struggle is spotty. Uncounted societies have successfully struggled for justice, reform, rights, and reconciliation with nonviolent political tools; yet military battles and wars hold more intrigue and prestige for historians. Not until 1985 was the first book-length treatment of nonviolent resistance to Nazism published in English, Jacques Semelin's *Unarmed against Hitler*.

Earlier, I mentioned the downfall of the dictator Milosevic. Despite the televised images of the federal parliament in flames, it was not the capital city of Belgrade that brought down Milosevic. Rather, the political demise of Milosevic came about through a provincial uprising organised by Serbian students acting through a grass-roots movement called Otpor!, or Resistance. One heard nothing about the organising of 70,000 students, through 130 branches, until after footage was shown of the Serbian parliament burning on the BBC and CNN. Many got the idea that Milosevic was sacked by rampaging mobs. Yet he had been brought down by a massive non-cooperation movement, which had rendered the central government unable to govern.'

What are you working on while at the RAI?

'I am interested in the history of ideas as it pertains to nonviolent struggle. I hope to fill a few gaps in the literature.

As noted, Gandhi held a view of power that sees all governments and systems as dependent on the cooperation and obedience of the governed. Hence the central importance of non-cooperation to the employment of nonviolent struggle. We know that Tolstoy's views influenced Gandhi's thinking on non-cooperation and the validity of ordinary people making history. It appears that Gandhi had developed his theory of power three years before he read Tolstoy's 'A Letter to a Hindu.' I would like to know more about Tolstoy's influence on Gandhi.

I hope to make progress on a case study on the 1924 Vykom Temple Satyagraha, in what is now Kerala, India. Outcastes were forbidden to walk where a road passed in front of an orthodox Hindu temple, the most direct route to their homes, and thus spent extra hours daily avoiding the temple road. The brahmins said that if the outcastes used the road, the high-caste worshippers and their gods would be sullied by the shadows cast by the unapproachables. An important and successful nonviolent struggle ensued. Due to illness, Gandhi declined to take on the management of this campaign, saying that he would 'guide the movement from afar', meaning that he did not chronicle this nonviolent struggle. Most accounts rely on a single narrative, but the author did not apparently use British records. I hope that British archival records can help me fill out the picture.

Flying in the face of a number of stereotypes, a silent, nonviolent demonstration of Christian and Muslim Arab women took place in the Old City of Jerusalem, on 15 April 1933. The silent procession moved to the Mosque of 'Umar, where a Christian woman spoke, asking the British to honor their pledges to the Arabs, as they were honoring Lord Balfour's letter. The demonstrators then proceeded silently to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where a Muslim woman gave her remarks on the 'failure' of the colonial administrators to 'keep their promises' to the Arabs for liberty and independence. Working from British documents, I hope that to bring fresh light to bear on this revealing instance of nonviolent direct action.

I have for some time wanted to write an essay on the 'Black Power' phase of the US civil rights encounter. I shall be arguing that the shift to retaliatory and threatening idioms represented by 'Black Power' occurred because, within the civil rights movement, by 1965 we had stopped the rigorous training in nonviolent struggle, which had been a hallmark of the earlier mobilisation. Cessation of formal training meant that a long, internal strategic debate about the connection between ends and means had ceased. In the resulting vacuum, it was easier for a new language, hinting at violence, effectively to hasten the end of the nonviolent movement.'

Any other comments on your work?

'Based on interviews with guerrillas and former combatants, I know that people and groups often use violence because they presume that there is no alternative. Or the only arguments that they have heard are for armed struggle. The term 'force' has been usurped to mean military force. Governments often operate on the presumption that violence is the 'real' power.

Growing up in the United States, children learn about the war of independence fought against the British. The chronicles of military historians have won out over other narratives. The saga of independence is told through warfare. Yet scholars now know that prior to the outbreak of the war, by 1775, ten out of the original 16 colonies had achieved *de facto* independence from Britain through the employment of nonviolent sanctions. More and improved historiography of nonviolent struggle need to be encouraged.We must strengthen the arguments for fighting with political, nonviolent tools. It is ridiculous to think that one can get rid of terrorism by warfare. '*I believe that we must spread the knowledge of nonviolent struggle so widely that persons who now choose to become terrorists instead are aware of nonviolent alternatives to a blind faith in violence*'.'

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