EDITORIAL NOTES

Exceptional States  The first two papers in this issue emphasize the importance of politics and class relations within Canada as an explanatory factor, as compared to relations of dependency with the United States. In “NAFTA, the Redesign, and Rescaling of Canada’s Welfare State,” Robert Johnson and Rianne Mahon argue that the Canadian welfare state regime has converged towards the US model since the Free Trade Agreement, but that forces linked to continental integration have not been the primary cause. Rather, the process of welfare state design and rescaling has shown common features in both countries and allows for progressive, politically contingent possibilities. The authors distinguish between two ways of connecting Labour market policy and social policy — the “workfare/duty state” model and a more progressive “social investment” model based on active state support for caring services and lifelong learning. In both countries, the former model has been most powerful but the latter has been more influential in Canada, particularly at the subnational level.

Paul Kellogg, in “Kari Levitt and the Long Detour of Canadian Political Economy,” concludes that the key focus of Canadian political economy should be on class relations within Canada instead of on Canada-US economic relations. He argues that Levitt’s classic book Silent Surrender: The Multinational Corporation in Canada still exerts a strong influence on the analytical framework of the Left, even though its predictions have proved to be “entirely wrong.” Kellogg argues that there has been no long-term increase in US corporate hegemony in Canada, a decrease rather than increase in resource dependency, a decline rather than increase in US global corporate hegemony, and a major increase in Canada’s position as a major capital exporter instead of a deepening of dependency. The failure of Levitt’s model to explain these fundamental trajectories of change means that it should be rejected rather than celebrated.
Carolyn Bassett's article “Labour and Hegemony in South Africa's First Decade of Majority Rule” explores some of the general dilemmas faced by progressive activists; in particular, problems faced by democratic trade unionists in the context of the post-apartheid government in South Africa. The article seeks to explain why a powerful and ostensibly socialist trade union, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), adopted a strategy to co-manage capitalist economic restructuring in partnership with the African National Congress (ANC) government during the 1990s. She examines whether COSATU’s participation in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) represented a real power-sharing arrangement in which Labour's interests would be truly represented in a transition to socialism or an incorporation of Labour into an ANC strategy to consolidate bourgeois hegemony. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Bassett argues that in fact, COSATU paved the way to its own marginalization within the country's political and economic system, thus enabling corporate leaders to take a leading role in the economic restructuring that followed the downfall of apartheid. While her conclusions are pessimistic, this article serves as a useful reminder of the constraints that exist on trade union actors even within the context of apparently progressive regimes.

The following three articles were presented at the Great Lakes Graduate Student Conference held at Carleton University, Ottawa, in May 2004.

In “Reconsidering Incorporation: Uneven Histories of Capitalist Expansion and Encroachment, Native America,” Caleb M. Bush critically examines theories of capitalist expansion, and argues that processes of incorporation into global capitalism are ongoing and partial, rather than past and complete. Bush emphasizes the role of local agency in shaping incorporation. In applying the concept of incorporation to the experience of indigenous peoples of North America, he contends that the exploitation of indigenous lands and resources needs to be considered in world-historic terms, not as an instance of internal colonialism.

Agnes Czajka's article, “Inclusive Exclusion: Citizenship and the American Prisoner and Prison,” considers the proliferation of prisons in the United States, particularly the increasing number of supermaximum security or
“camp” prisons, as an example of “the normalization of a state of excep-
tion.” In her analysis, Czajka applies Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the
camp as “a physical space that is opened when a state of exception becomes
the rule.” While the incarcerated and the non-incarcerated form two distinct
societies, they are nevertheless intricately entwined. In the case of the
supermax prison, however, the degree of exclusion is higher than in standard
prisons. Prisoners are isolated from society and each other, reduced to “bare
life” in solitary confinement, and their treatment is beyond the scrutiny of
social and judicial review. The use of surveillance technology allows for an
extraordinary degree of exclusion from human contact: prisoners exist
“outside the rubric of citizenship.”

In an inspiring and broad-ranging comment piece entitled “Ruthless
Empire(s), Activist Subcultures, or New Solidarities? Choices for Today’s
Global Radicals,” Joel Davison Harden grapples with some of the enduring
problems of progressive organizing and struggles to capture the unique charac-
teristics of contemporary forms of mobilization. His piece centres on the
dilemma apparent to many: while recent demonstrations against war and
neoliberalism have attracted hundreds of thousands if not millions of
protesters and have displayed considerable inventiveness and energy, it is less
clear what impact they have had. He examines four key features of today’s
“movement of movements.” First, he raises debates about the appropriate
site of struggle, whether transnational or local. Second, he discusses debates
about agency, and argues that traditional activists like trade unions still play
an essential role in radical politics. Third, he looks at the “imaginary” of
today’s movement of movements. While radical protesters are often viewed
as lacking any positive alternatives to contemporary forms of capitalist global-
ization, Harden argues that large-scale activism is an inspiring learning process
in itself, one that leads rapidly away from mere opposition to far-ranging
proposals and critiques. Finally, he directs our attention to the “mode” of
radical strategy and to claims about contemporary movements’ lack of organi-
zational coherence. Again, he contends that organization is never absent,
and advocates democratic socialist approaches to collective action. While he
offers no concrete blueprints for action, he calls for continued optimism and
attention to the enormous potential of contentious politics in the current
world environment.
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Carolyn Bassett teaches in the Atkinson School of Social Sciences at York University in Toronto, Ontario.

Caleb M. Bush teaches in the Department of Sociology at San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico, USA.

Agnes Czajka is a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at York University in Toronto, Ontario.

Joel Davison Harden is a member of the International Socialists, and is currently writing a social history of contemporary anticapitalism. He is also actively involved with the War Resisters campaign (http://www.resisters.ca).

Robert Johnson teaches in the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa in Ottawa, Ontario.

Paul Kellogg is an independent researcher, writer, and editor based in Toronto, Ontario. His recent articles have appeared in Political Studies (UK), Canadian Dimension, Contemporary Politics (UK), Marxism, and the Socialist Studies Bulletin.

Rianne Mahon is the Director of the Institute of Political Economy and Chancellor’s Professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario.