

"popular" culture, about how music with preindustrial roots got reworked to give voice to urban, industrial experience.

We learn here about the potential of mass media as a resource for mobilization, thereby complicating our sense that such media are simply resources for corporate hegemony. At the same time, we see how much potential for local democracy has been lost by the capturing of broadcasting by national structures. This observation is of more than historical interest: We are once again in the midst of struggles for local autonomy in a variety of media spheres.

The textile workers story transforms our understanding of the functions of organization and leadership in social movements. This case suggests that opening up channels of communication and freeing the initiative of indigenous leaders can be far more effective than the work of professional organizers and established organizations in enabling

collective action. The story told here ought to stimulate a research agenda aimed at specifying the conditions that encourage self-organization and bottom-up creativity.

Finally, this story asks us to reexamine conventional wisdom about southern white workers. How does the evident militancy and class consciousness documented by Roscigno and Danaher, and expressed in the mill hand (and miner) songs of that period, fit with accepted explanations of their conservatism and racism? How did repression and failure of Southern movements in the 1930s affect the consciousness of succeeding generations?

These are only some of the ways that *Voices of Southern Labor* ought to stimulate and challenge those interested in the dynamics of popular mobilization and consciousness. Its marvelously detailed historical specificity compels us to see not just a fascinating case but our own world with fresh eyes.

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## The Marginalizing Rhetoric of Nationalism

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That September 11, 2001 stimulated an intensified security obsessed discourse among politicians, military experts, social scientists, administration of justice practitioners, and corporate security interests is without dispute. Instrumental in this regard was the passage in October, 2001, of the USA PATRIOT Act. In six easy to read chapters, Amitai Etzioni, political sociologist qua guru of the communitarian movement in the United States, sets out to contextualize historically the meaning and ramifications of security measures embedded within the USA PATRIOT Act. Etzioni's analysis is based on secondary review of published data ranging from popular culture newspapers and magazines to academic journals.

This review commences with references to Etzioni's interpretation of matters pertaining to security and communication devices. In particular, I will focus my attention on the first four chapters as they appear to constitute his legerdemain. The final chapter, "On Nation Building," appears oddly out of place when juxtaposed to the substantive material

*How Patriotic Is the Patriot Act?: Freedom Versus Security in the Age of Terrorism*, by **Amitai Etzioni**. New York: Routledge, 2004. 196 pp. \$26.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-415-95047-3.

preceding it. The review concludes with critical assessment of the ideas expressed in this book.

As with his previously published work, especially his communitarian writing, in *How Patriotic Is the Patriot Act?* Etzioni appears to be attempting to find middle ground between polarized domestic actors who, according to Etzioni, appear to align themselves in one of two camps: (a) the "Slippery Slope" camp; or (b) the national security camp. It is Etzioni's belief that Americans have historically vacillated between advocacy for increasing civil liberties and the protection of individual rights during times of relative peace, while privileging support for decreasing civil liberties and individual rights

in times of national crisis. That is, by Etzioni's account, Americans are quite savvy about their understanding of risk, both domestic and international, as they seem to seek what is in the country's best interest at any specific historical moment.

The first two substantive chapters in *How Patriotic Is the Patriot Act?* seek to clarify questions raised by critics with respect to intensified surveillance authority. The first chapter offers a strange mixture of affirming argument in support of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), and Sneak and Peak searches, while dishing out caution with regard to military tribunals, framing Americans as enemy combatants, Operation TIPS, and the Material Support Act. To those who would criticize the Act for its approval of warrantless searches or "sneak and peaks," Etzioni argues that the enemy is such that secrecy is of paramount importance when attempting to procure inculpatory material, or as he puts it, "No reasonable person would expect the FBI to leave a business card in the home of a suspected terrorist after it conducted a court-approved search" (p. 39).

The second chapter delves deeper into the actual programs used to intercept communications. With each iteration, Etzioni describes the way in which the software works, its purpose, and whether or not critics have it right. The prevailing argument is that communication has become far too sophisticated for the old "trap and trace" and "pen register" data collection and surveillance methods; new methods that take into account multiple modes of communication are required. His belief is that if some Americans are inadvertently ensnared in the web of electronic surveillance, it is a far more forgivable sin than the alternative, allowing terrorists to more effectively communicate with each other. Or to use his own words:

Whom should we distrust and how much? If basically no authority or media figure is trustworthy and "The System" is corrupt, we face a much larger challenge than if, in a few instances, public authorities intercept more e-mail than they are supposed to, or tap some phones they ought not to. (p. 75)

Most startling, and sadly all too consistent with the tenor of communitarian policy positions, Etzioni concludes his chapter on security by following the previous quote with an "America, love it or leave it" sentiment. To those Americans who believe that "no authority or media figure is trustworthy" and that the "system is corrupt," Etzioni informs them that "If someone believes this, she should either move to another country or fight for an entirely new political system" (p. 75). Etzioni's penchant for dualistic thinking characterizes much of his rhetorical framing of the current national security debate. For Etzioni, there appears to be little in the way of nuanced opinion. This may provide a more crystalline epistemological framework to work from, but it is clear that ideal-typical standpoints do not carry us very far in understanding the complex nature of the implementation and application of security mechanisms that many in the United States have experienced as violations of personal privacy. That said, this artificial bifurcation of people and ideas into neatly compartmentalized categories does serve the ideological purpose of establishing a metanarrative consistent with state policies, while marginalizing those discourses that challenge it.

Also troubling are numerous ambiguous references to important concepts, straw man arguments, and considerable naiveté regarding the checks and balances attributed to criminal justices who, one is led to believe, will "do the right thing" with regard to administration of their authority.

To confront head on those who would claim that the USA PATRIOT Act signifies an unprecedented expansion of police authority, Etzioni begins his book with a straw man argument. First, Etzioni makes it clear by way of example that for him the avatar of opposition to the USA PATRIOT Act is the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Then, by suggesting through juxtaposition that the oppositional position taken by the ACLU to the Act is consistent with a claim that the United States has fallen prey to the same measures of social control employed in Germany by the Weimar Republic, Etzioni creates a conveniently alarmist opposition that he will spend the remainder of the book delegitimizing. This quote attributed to Wendy Kaminer appears to serve as evidence of Etzioni's conviction, "[the FBI's] unchecked

domestic spying powers . . . instead of focusing on preventing, will revert to doing what it does best—monitoring, harassing, and intimidating political dissidents and thousands of harmless immigrants” (p. 9). From there, Etzioni links opposition to the PATRIOT Act with Nazi social control techniques. Etzioni acknowledges that there are some conservatives who oppose the Act, but never directs his critique toward them. For example, when the USA PATRIOT Act was passed in Congress, conservative *New York Times* columnist, William Safire, wrote that “a president of the United States has just assumed what amounts to dictatorial power.” Strong statement indeed, but invective is conveniently reserved for those “liberal” critics of the Act.

Etzioni's book was published in 2004. With the publicly acknowledged White House fraud that led to a war with Iraq; with the concentration of media leading the drumbeat to war by reprinting Pentagon statements rather than investigating the facts (e.g., *New York Times* reporter, Judith Miller), and by relying on retired military as their primary sources of information; and with the widely publicized outing of a CIA operative, Valerie Plame, who happened to be the wife of former Middle East Ambassador, Joseph Wilson, because Wilson rebuked White House uranium processing claims, there is little wonder that Americans are less than trusting of their government and the media. To recommend that thoughtful, well educated, but none-the-less fed up Americans find a new country to live in is a form of fanatical marginalizing rhetoric consistent with ideological interests articulated in the dominant metanarrative, and thus serves to further polarize public discourse by delegitimizing the voices of critics.

Of course, to destroy a democracy logically requires having one. To make certain readers are convinced that the United States is a democracy, Etzioni provides a definition:

Democracy, here, is taken to mean a polity in which there are regular, institutionalized changes in power, in line with the preferences of the people freely expressed. It entails a whole fabric of institutions: two or more political parties, some measure of checks and balances among the various branches of govern-

ment . . . , courts that effectively protect individual rights, and a free press. (p. 11)

It is important to note that Etzioni continues throughout the book to glide superficially over the sticky mess of subject constitution and commitment to the collective. For example, in an attempt to press the point that Americans seek balance in their public policy, Etzioni contends that “the public gradually restored its commitment to the rights centered, democratic regime. And as the government vigorously enacted measures to protect the public, the public's support for constitutional democracy was reaffirmed.” Neither claim is substantiated. What is more troubling, however, is the ambiguous reference to “the public” and “the government.” We know all too little about “the public,” and far too much about precisely who in government was and is responsible for pressing new security measures. There is no acknowledgement in Etzioni's account of the many criticisms leveled against the Bush Administration's key architects of the USA PATRIOT Act. In fact, in what can only be viewed as a clear statement of the book's ideological message, Routledge Press has quoted an effusively supportive Viet Dinh, believed to be the primary author of the USA PATRIOT Act, on the book's dust jacket. Neither is there any recognition of the now well documented influence emanating from The Project for the New American Century, the Defense Policy Group, the Family Research Council, and specific actors like Donald Rumsfeld, Karl Rove, Richard Pearl, Dick Cheney, Bill Crystal, and Paul Wolfowitz. Scholarly awareness of the powerful figures who constitute the Bush White House suggests any reference to “the government” and “checks and balances” requires critical review. Sadly, there is none.

Most disconcerting is the belief articulated by Etzioni that “the public” is the best source of federal oversight. This must be consistent with his previously articulated belief that democracies are constituted by a “free press,” otherwise, how can “the public” truly know what is happening? Unfortunately, here too Etzioni is stronger on rhetoric than truth. With six corporations owning and controlling virtually all major media, the embedded nature of media journalists with government officials, and the near blackout of all media

critical of state activities, it is hard to see how "the public" will be able to deduce precisely the machinations of state actors.

Etzioni claims that, despite public support for enactment, in times of fear of external threat, of restrictive policies aimed at curtailing civil liberties, when no attack is forthcoming Americans soon return to support for their democracy and a call for return of civil liberties. However, lacking from this book is any reference to theoretical literatures that link cultural perceptions of risk and fear with allegiance to government practices. One could counter claims made by Etzioni that Americans are compliant with federal civil liberty restrictions during times of perceived risk by arguing that the culture has been prepared for such a response through the proliferation of public pronouncements of possible terrorist attack, thereby maintaining a peren-

nial state of heightened alert and subsequent fear of the other. American citizens understandably turn to their government for truth in times of crisis: What Americans know is what those in power feed them. In that way, it is fairly easy to understand how a constant state of fear is perpetuated, and policies ostensibly aimed at eradicating the threat behind the fear are vigorously supported. Etzioni skates past this more critical but all too important aspect of the politics surrounding the USA PATRIOT Act.

In sum, despite what appears to be an effort to present an even-handed account of national security measures enacted with the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, Amitai Etzioni's book does not supply readers with a historical and theoretical understanding of the multivariate influences that coalesced around the crafting and enactment of it.

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### Inside the Nuclear Plant's Executive Office

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*Corporate Profit and Nuclear Safety* is a very valuable book, but the title is misleading. The book is not about corporate profits and nuclear safety but corporate profits and investor interests. The safety of the public is of no concern for the two economists/authors. Title aside, the book's value is the review of an unprecedented treasure trove of company documents demonstrating the short-term profit and executive compensation interests that drive free-market capitalism today, regardless of the public's interests.

The story starts with the deregulation of the electrical power industry in the early 1980s. Executives at Northeast Utilities faced competition for the first time, and called in the McKinsey consulting firm to plan ahead. Together they decided that the company would cut costs on its three most expensive operations, its nuclear power stations near New London, Connecticut, the Millstone plants. For 10 years, through 1996, they progressively cut back on maintenance, delayed repairs, and greatly reduced the workforce, and greatly improved profits—and the bonuses of the top executives. As the book details, they did this against the objections of

*Corporate Profit and Nuclear Safety: Strategy at Northeast Utilities in the 1990s*, by **Paul W. MacAvoy** and **Jean W. Rosenthal**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. \$35.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-691-11994-5.

workers and managers, even disciplining some who persisted in sounding warnings. As a series of accidents and near misses, some of them very dangerous, increased in volume, and after a whistleblower was featured in a *TIME* cover story on one Millstone reactor, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) stepped in and refused to allow all three nuclear power stations to restart. (They had been shut down at the time for scheduled maintenance and unscheduled repairs.) Ten small utilities that had contracts to buy power from Northeast Utilities sued the company, asked for \$200 million and settled for \$38 million. (The authors of this book were retained by the 10 utilities to make the case for malfeasance.) The Connecticut public utilities authority ruled that the company