

sympathy of the reader. Perhaps Machiavelli had repented and in his waning days realized the great wisdom that the opposite of love is not hate, but power.

There is a simple inscription on a tomb in North Africa that speaks to this wisdom. "I, the captain of a legion of Rome, serving in the desert of Libya, have learnt and pondered this truth: There are in life but two things to be sought, Love and Power, and no one has both."

### ***A Case in Point***

CARL GULDAGER

**Empire**, by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. xvii + 478 pp.*

OUT OF HIS EXPERIENCE with the country's political turmoil, the German artist, Gerhard Richter, has come to a keen and critical judgment: "Because Marxist intellectuals refuse to own up to their own disillusionment, it transforms itself into a craving for revenge. And so they turn their own ideological bankruptcy into the utter bankruptcy of the whole world—mainly the capitalist world, of course, which they vilify and poison in their hatred and despair." There is perhaps no better explanation than this for the curious collaboration, *Empire*, by Michael Hardt, a young American academic, and Antonio Negri, an older Italian researcher, university lecturer, and writer.

This odd couple's work has become, according to a lengthy feature article in *The New York Times* (July 7, 2001), one of

the current rages of academia. Following the standard journalistic ploy of discerning a dilemma for which their discovery is the news-making answer, the newspaper first describes a panic among professors since other revolutionary theories (Claude Levi-Strauss's structuralism, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, Michel Foucault's poststructuralism, Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis) have all become a bit time-worn and, to fill the resulting void, *The Times* suggests *Empire* might just be the next big idea.

The article reports "frissons of excitement" running through campuses around the world, which is probably to be expected since this book has been heralded by some as "the first great new theoretical synthesis of the new millennia" and as "nothing less than a rewriting of 'The Communist Manifesto' for our times." Positioning neo-Marxist theory within the emerging trend of globalization has made the authors, in one reviewer's view, "the Marx and Engels of the Internet age." The success of *Empire* has come not only from professors eager for "the next big idea," but from intellectuals on the left who have described it as "*Das Kapital* of the 21st century" and those anti-globalization militants who demonstrate against the World Bank, the Group of Eight, and World Trade Organization meetings.

Heady stuff indeed, but there is more: while Michael Hardt is a newcomer to the academic stage, the older Antonio Negri has a history. At the time of publication of this book, he was an inmate of Rome's Rebibbia Prison, serving a thirteen-year sentence as, in *The Times'* view, a "suspected terrorist mastermind." Others might put it more accurately by stating he was convicted for inciting violence, which must have been extreme, considering the often chaotic state of Italian politics and the length of the sentence.

All this might have been viewed as titillating in certain intellectual circles before the awful events of September 11,

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2001, but it now appears in a rather more sober light. However, it must be noted that the authors have been exact in dating their work. In the preface they announce: "This book was begun well after the Persian Gulf War and completed well before the beginning of the war in Kosovo," adding "The reader should thus situate the argument at the midpoint between these two signal events in the construction of Empire."

Readers must also take into account the authors' new definition of Empire: not as in the Roman Empire or the British Empire, but as standing for a new world order they see arising from the increase in globalization and the spreading electronic revolution. They see this trend not as the latest stage in the history of imperialism and the nation-state, but as an entirely new phenomenon bringing a new political system and a new form of power. This they have dubbed Empire, and, as they see it, not too surprisingly, as a new opportunity for revolt, calling to mind the Marxian dictum that in any drastic change "force is the midwife."

Considering the work, *The Times* describes its "broad sweep and learning," the nearly "500 pages of densely argued history, philosophy, and political theory," with all "the formal trappings of a master theory in the old European tradition." The newspaper also remarks on the quotes that serve as chapter headings, from Machiavelli, Spinoza, Hegel, Hobbes, Kant, Marx, and Foucault. However, not cited is a quote from one Jerry Rubin: "The New Left sprang...from Elvis's gyrating pelvis." The authors also offer in the preface this helpful guide to perusing their work: "Like most large books this one can be read in many different ways: front to back, back to front, in pieces, in a hopscotch pattern, or through correspondences."

The authors further provide this description of the scope and organization of their effort: part one introduces "the gen-

eral problematic of Empire." Parts two and three together relate "the passage from modernity to postmodernity, or really from imperialism to Empire," part two following "the history of ideas and culture from the early modern period to the present," while part three covers "the same passage from the standpoint of production, whereby production is understood in a very broad sense, ranging from economic production to the production of subjectivity." Between parts two and three, there is an "Intermezzo," "a hinge that articulates the movement from one standpoint to another." Having treated the realm of production "where social inequities are clearly revealed" and "where the most effective resistance and alternatives to the power of Empire arise," finally, part four presents "those alternatives that today are tracing the lines of movement beyond Empire."

Not so clearly identified, nor explained, are some ten italicized segments, appearing at various chapter endings, that can only be described as impassioned preachments, one of which explains how, in the authors' judgment, the United States Constitution is clearly a program for world domination, insisting that the Founding Fathers who drew it up were simply determined to do better what European imperialists had undertaken but failed to do, namely, to rule the world. They also offer this roundabout argument:

Many locate the ultimate authority that rules over the processes of globalization and the new world order in the United States. Proponents praise the United States as the world leader and sole superpower, and detractors denounce it as an imperialist oppressor. Both these views rest on the assumption that the United States has simply donned the mantle of global power that the European nations have now let fall.... Our basic hypothesis, however, that a new imperial form of sovereignty has emerged, contradicts both these views. *The United States does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperialistic*

*project.* [Author's italics] No nation will be world leader in the way modern European nations were.

The reader is left to puzzle what to make of all this, and the suspicion is irresistible that beyond the scholarly scaffolding, the heavy academic prose, the strained effort to come up with something timely and new, and the shock value of the various sermonettes, there lurks the same old tired view of the world as a struggle between capital (bad) and labor (good), accompanied by the threadbare slogan, "Workers of the world, unite!" A clue to *Empire's* ultimate argument may be found in the emotional rant that closes the book. It is entitled, *Militant*, who is described as "the one who best expresses the life of the multitude: the agent of biopolitical production and resistance against Empire." Not, as quickly noted, "the sad, ascetic agent of the Third International," but someone like "the militant agitator of the Industrial Workers of the World." How the poor old Wobbly, who was jeered in his day with the accusation that the initials, I.W.W., stood for "I Won't Work," would be startled by his rescue from history's dumpster. As another example of the ideal communist militant, the authors offer Saint Francis of Assisi. And in a mood of near blissfulness, they proclaim the coming moment of triumph: in the last words of their work announcing "communism, cooperation and revolution" arising "together in love, simplicity and innocence. This is the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist."

It is unfortunate that most serious readers encountering this unlikely outburst will have seen through what Eric Voegelin has described as "Marxism's deliberate intellectual swindle to establish an ideology that supports violence against human beings with a show of moral indignation," a deadly swindle that has cost, it is estimated, some twenty million lives.

What is most alarming here is to dis-

cover the stubborn persistence of wrong ideas, although that is rather to be expected of such fervent followers. Yet, at a time when Marx was writing in London that oppressive mill owners would always prevent their workers from improving themselves through education, factory bosses in New England were giving their hands time off to attend Emerson's lectures. A century later, Communists were still holding to Marx's theory of "immiseration," whereby capitalism would inevitably result in the deepening poverty and misery of working people, despite the evidence that capitalist economies were providing higher standards of living than the Soviets ever achieved employing Russia's vast resources, strict economic planning, and the use of slave labor.

The arguments in support of Empire seem to follow this same sad path of fallacies. On the matter of the authors' insistence on the decline of the nation-state, echoing the Marxian argument that "workers have no country," although it is clear that Europeans (trying to build a common market, a common currency, and eventually a new commonwealth) still persist in thinking of themselves first as Frenchmen, Germans, or as English. And, on the matter of globalization, some economists argue that it more a trend than a revolution, with exports of goods as a percentage of gross domestic product, about the same as it was in 1910. Further, they point out that much of the world is not deeply into globalization, with large parts of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia left out. Finally, statistics show that those nations having global economies still do most of their business in home markets.

The suggestion that "supernational organisms" will dominate this coming Empire, citing the United Nations as an example, overlooks that organization's long history of frustration and futility. Ignoring the United States in its present

role of economic world leadership is as unrealistic as pretending that the implosion of the Soviet Empire was simply the result of Leninist-Stalinist errors and not the obvious failure of communism as a vital force in the world today.

But still the true believers persist. There comes to mind, as a bit of further evidence, a dinner a few years ago in a rather elegant Black Forest spa. Somewhat distracting was a large affair in the adjoining banquet hall, the sound level rising with each round of drinks, speeches accompanied by rhythmic handclapping, then group singing, some nostalgic tunes, others rather martial. Curiosity overcoming decorum, the maître d', an Italian of some presence, was asked about the gala next door. "Ah," he said. "A reunion of sorts. They are all one-time officials of the former East German government. No longer Communists, of course. I would imagine they are all Democratic Socialists now." And he shrugged, as only the Italian shrugs, "They are getting together now from time to time, I suppose, to forget."

Somehow this affair seemed more than merely noisy and nostalgic. There were

overtones both sad and upsetting, a reminder that while some dangerous and destructive ideas fade away, others seem never to die, and *Empire*, in this view, would seem a case in point.

### ***Lost Inspiration and the Fall of the Soviet Union***

MATTHEW RICHER

**Political Will & Personal Belief: The Decline and Fall of Soviet Communism**, by Paul Hollander, *New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999. xi + 356 pp.*

LEGEND HAS IT that in the early 1920s one of Vladimir Lenin's fellow Bolsheviks asked him to justify the growing number of

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