
Book Review

A Cynical Attempt To Destroy the United States

by Nancy Spannaus

Dime's Worth of Difference: Beyond the Lesser of Two Evils

Edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair
Oakland, California: CounterPunch and AK Press, 2004
289 pages, paperbound, \$15.95

This book is a sucker punch. If you fall for it, you are buying into the destruction of the United States, and the world as a whole.

What the authors argue is that the political party system of the United States is so rotten that the Democrats are no better than the Republicans. They glide over the fascist policy of perpetual war and depression of the Cheney-Bush Administration. They inundate you with all the bad things Al Gore and his cohorts got Bill Clinton to do in his capitulation to the Newt Gingrich program—and then tell you to vote for George Bush, because that way, the American republic which they hate will be destroyed all the faster!

You see, the fact is that this book is an operation by a bunch of Euro-Socialists who hate the United States, not because of what the current Administration is doing in Iraq or elsewhere, but because of its very nature as a sovereign republic dedicated to the creation of a Commonwealth of sovereign republics throughout the world. Co-editor Cockburn, trained at Oxford, may be a naturalized American, but his ideology is Euro-Socialist to the core. And the Euro-Socialists want to see a global feudal system, with the United States destroyed.

This is just the opposite outlook to that of Lyndon LaRouche, whom the authors lyingly never mention in their review of the fight within the Democratic Party over the past 30 years. LaRouche argues that the noble mission which the United States adopted at its founding, and has as a living legacy, makes it the unique power able to pull the world out of the war and depression collapse which the last 40 years of

post-industrial insanity has created. Without the assertion of U.S. power *for the good*, the planet is looking at a devolution into a New Dark Age.

So, populists beware! What we are dealing with here is not an honest critique of the state of the two-party system, but an attempt to destroy the United States.

The Punch Line

Undoubtedly, many of you think I'm exaggerating this point, but, in fact, *Dime's Worth of Difference* does not leave it to the reader's imagination, or to innuendo. The final essay in this collection, by historian Gabriel Kolko, entitled "Alliances and the Amerian Election," makes the argument clearly.

Kolko begins by asserting: "Alliances have been a major cause of wars throughout modern history, removing inhibitions that might otherwise have caused Germany, France, and countless nations to reflect much more cautiously before embarking on death and destruction. The dissolution of all alliances is a crucial precondition of a world without wars."

Kolko proceeds to argue that Democrat John Kerry, of course, is in favor of alliance; one of Kerry's major arguments against President Bush is that Bush's unilateralism has destroyed American standing in the world, kicking our allies in the teeth. For this reason, Kolko wants him to be defeated. I quote:

"... the Bush administration's falsehoods, rudeness, and peremptory demands have begun to destroy an alliance system that for the world's peace should have been abolished long ago. In this context, it is far more likely that the nations allied with the U.S. in the past will be compelled to stress their own interests and go their own ways. The Democrats are far less likely to continue that exceedingly desirable process, a process ultimately much more conducive to peace in the world. They will perpetuate the same adventurism and opportunism that began generations ago and that Bush has merely built upon, the same dependence on military means to solve political crises, the same interference with every corner of the globe as if America has a divinely ordained mission to muck around with all the world's problems. The Democrats' greater finesse in justifying these policies is therefore more dangerous

because they will be made to seem more credible and keep alive alliances that only reinforce the U.S. refusal to acknowledge the limits of its power. In the long run, Kerry's pursuit of these aggressive goals will lead eventually to a renewal of the dissolution of alliances, but in the short-run he will attempt to rebuild them—and that is to be deplored.

“Critics of American foreign policy will not rule Washington after this election regardless of who wins. As dangerous as he is, Bush's reelection is much more likely to produce the continued destruction of the alliance system that is so crucial to American power in the long run. Facts in no way imply moral judgments if we merely identify them. One does not have to believe that ‘worse is better’ but we have to consider candidly the foreign policy consequences of a renewal of Bush's mandate, not the least because it is likely. Given the choices, I am not voting.”

Kolko is lying. The determinant of whether there is war or not, is not whether there are alliances between nations. The question is what the content and nature of alliances are: cooperation between sovereign nation-states, or imperial, geopolitical designs. The Cheney-run Bush Administration has shown that it does not need alliances, in order to carry out its imperial agenda. And cooperation among sovereign nation-states is the appropriate pre-condition for peace.

Second, it is a lie to say that critics of current U.S. foreign policy will not rule Washington after the election. The foreign policy of a Kerry Administration is not yet determined—and the nature of the campaign between now and the election, and afterwards, will be decisive; specifically, whether Kerry listens to leading Democrat LaRouche and his Youth Movement.

Third, it is a lie for Kolko to say that he is not promoting the outlook of “worse is better,” the outlook of sections of the Social Democratic and Communist Party leadership of the early 1930s, which led to their refusal to effectively fight Hitler's coming to power. By advising that it's better to have Bush than Kerry, Kolko is precisely following in the footsteps of those idiots, with the threat of precisely the same consequences: the consolidation of a fascist dictatorship for decades to come.

It is an ironic touch that Cockburn et al. chose to name their book after the motto of racist-populist Gov. George Wallace. Wallace used the term “Not a dime's worth of difference” during the 1968 Presidential campaign, when he was stumping against Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon, on behalf of a Confederate agenda, one which the Republican Party has since taken over, but which actually cut significantly into Democratic constituencies in that electoral race. Instead of citing Wallace, Cockburn et al. cite country singer Waylon Jennings, perhaps to cover their tracks. The major point of attack in the book's 23 essays is against the Democratic Party. “Issues” are made out of welfare reform, NAFTA, the oil industry, racism, abortion rights, and other traditional left-wing hobby-horses, and the alleged shortcomings of the Dem-

ocratic Party. Only four of the essays attack Republicans, specifically John McCain, Karl Rove, Marc Racicot, and Rick Santorum. Everything else is aimed at the Democratic Leadership Council, Clinton, and other Democrats.

But even when the attacks seem on point, they are wrong. First, the authors never mention the FDR tradition in the Democratic Party, the touchstone for what the modern party represented, and where it must return in order to fulfill its mission for the nation. Second, the authors never cite the actual cause of the degeneration of the party, in the adoption of the post-industrial, countercultural credo of the late 1960s. The fact is, that they are part of that corruption! And the problems they complain about in the economic sphere, including NAFTA, could only be resolved by returning to the economic development perspective of the FDR era.

Thirdly, the authors never mention the fight which has been waged by the LaRouche wing of the party, starting in 1979, to turn it back toward its FDR tradition of fighting for technological progress and the general welfare. This is by no means a matter of ignorance, but rather the desire to suppress the alternative which LaRouche represents within the Democratic Party itself.

LaRouche's all-out fight to transform the Democratic Party, in the course of the campaign to get Kerry elected President of the United States, represents the only hope for preventing a disaster coming out of this election. The key to victory lies not simply in educating and influencing the party leadership, some of which is definitely listening to LaRouche, but in forcing the base of the Democratic Party to recognize its responsibility for the crisis we are now in, and to get off its duff and change. The problem with populists is that they don't take up the responsibilities of a republican citizenry, both for educating themselves on policy, and for acting to ensure that the right policies are enacted. A populist would rather complain, than step into the fight. A populist would rather tear someone down, than build the political force for a positive alternative to the collapse of the nation.

Such an outlook is to be expected from types like Cockburn and Kolko, but their agenda cannot succeed unless they succeed in roping in a lot of other people behind them. They are determined to suppress the Democratic vote, or turn the vote to their cohort Nader, in hopes of ensuring Bush's reelection. There is no question but that there are many ordinary Americans who are so disgusted with current politics, that they are potentially susceptible to the Cockburn-Kolko argument. That is a dangerous situation for us all.

Contrary to Cockburn and Kolko, there are clear stakes in this election. If Bush is re-elected, we have a guaranteed pathway toward fascism, at home and abroad. If Kerry is elected, we have a chance to turn the United States onto the path which FDR represented so well, and which Lyndon LaRouche is putting forward today.

If you want a future for this nation and the world, don't spend a dime on this book.