11. Do Capitalists Fund Revolutions?*

Michael Barker

To date capitalists have financially supported two types of revolution: they have funded the neoliberal revolution to "take the risk out of democracy",¹ and they have supported/hijacked popular revolutions (or in some cases manufactured 'revolutions') in countries of geostrategic importance (i.e. in counties where regime change is beneficial to transnational capitalism).² The former neoliberal revolution has, of course, been funded by a hoard of right wing philanthropists intent on neutralising progressive forces within society, while the latter 'democratic revolutions' are funded by an assortment of 'bipartisan' quasi-nongovernmental organizations, like the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and private institutions like George Soros' Open Society Institute.

The underlying mechanisms by which capitalists hijack popular revolutions have been outlined in William I. Robinson's seminal book, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony* (1996), which examines elite interventions in four countries - Chile, Nicaragua, the Philippines, and Haiti.³ Robinson hypothesized that as a result of the public backlash (in the 1970s) against the US government's repressive and covert foreign policies, foreign policy making elites elected to put a greater emphasis on overt means of overthrowing 'problematic' governments through the strategic manipulation of civil society. In 1984,

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by-michael-barker>

this 'democratic' thinking was institutionalised with the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy, an organisation that acts as the coordinating body for better funded 'democracy promoting' organisations like US Agency for International Development and the Central Intelligence Agency. (See also Fisher, Chapters 2 and 20, and Berger, Chapter 18.) Robinson observes that:

... the understanding on the part of US policymakers that power ultimately rests in civil society, and that state power is intimately linked to a given correlation of forces in civil society, has helped shape the contours of the new political intervention. Unlike earlier interventionism, the new intervention focuses much more intensely on civil society itself, in contrast to formal government structures, in intervened countries. The purpose of 'democracy promotion' is not to suppress but to penetrate and conquer civil society in intervened countries, that is, the complex of 'private' organizations such as political parties, trade unions, the media, and so forth, and from therein, integrate subordinate classes and national groups into a hegemonic transnational social order... This function of civil society as an arena for exercising domination runs counter to conventional (particularly pluralist) thinking on the matter, which holds that civil society is a buffer between state domination and groups in society, and that class and group domination is diluted as civil society develops.⁴

Thus it is not too surprising that Robinson should conclude that the primary goal of 'democracy promoting' groups, like the NED, is the promotion of polyarchy or low-intensity democracy over more substantive forms of democratic governance.⁵ Here it is useful to turn to Barry Gills, Joen Rocamora, and Richard Wilson's work which provides a useful description of low-intensity democracy, they observe that:

Low Intensity Democracy is designed to promote stability. However, it is usually accompanied by neoliberal economic policies to restore economic growth. This usually accentuates economic hardship for the less privileged and deepens the short-term structural effects of economic crisis as the economy opens further to the competitive winds of the world market and global capital. The pains of economic adjustment are supposed to be temporary, preparing the society to proceed to a higher stage of development. The temporary economic suffering of the majority is further supposed to be balanced by the benefits of a freer democratic political culture. But unfortunately for them, the poor and dispossessed cannot eat votes! In such circumstances, Low Intensity Democracy may 'work' in the short term, primarily as a strategy to reduce political tension, but is fragile in the long term, due to its inability to redress fundamental political and economic problems.⁶

So while capitalists appear happy to fund the neoliberal 'revolution', or geostrategic revolutions that promote low-intensity democracy, the one revolution that capitalists will not bankroll will be the revolution at home, that is, here in our Western (low-intensity) democracies: a point that is forcefully argued in INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence's book *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*. Of course, liberal-minded capitalists do support efforts to 'depose' radical neoconservatives, as demonstrated by liberal attempts to oust Bush's regime by the Sorosbacked Americans Coming Together coalition.⁷ But as in NED-backed strategic 'revolutions,' the results of such campaigns are only ever likely to promote low-intensity democracy, thereby ensuring the replacement of one (business-led) elite with another one (in the US's case with the Democrats).

So the question remains: can progressive activists work towards creating a more equitable (and participatory) world using funding derived from those very groups within society that stand to lose most from such revolutionary changes? The obvious answer to this question is no. Yet, if this is the case, why are so many progressive (sometimes even radical) groups accepting funding from major liberal foundations (which, after all, were created by some of most successful capitalists)?

Several reasons may help explain this contradictory situation. Firstly, it is well known that progressive groups are often underfunded, and their staff overworked, thus there is every likelihood that many groups and activists that receive support from liberal foundations have never even considered the problems associated with such funding.⁸ If this is the case then hopefully their exposure to the arguments presented in this article will help more activists begin to rethink their unhealthy relations with their funders.

On the other hand, it seems likely that many progressive groups understand that the broader goals and aspirations of liberal foundations are incompatible with their own more radical visions for the future; yet, despite recognizing this dissonance between their ambitions, it would

seem that many progressive organizations believe that they can beat the foundations at their own game and trick them into funding projects that will promote a truly progressive social change. Here it is interesting to note that paradoxically some radical groups do in fact receive funding from liberal foundations. And like those progressive groups that attempt to trick the foundations, many of these groups argue that will take money from anyone willing to give it so long as it comes with no strings attached. These final two positions are held by numerous activist organizations, and are also highly problematic. This is case because if we can agree that it is unlikely that liberal foundations will fund the much needed societal changes that will bring about their own demise, why do they continue funding such progressive activists?

Despite the monumental importance of this question to progressive activists worldwide, judging by the number of articles dealing with it in the alternative media very little importance appears to have been attached to discussing this question and investigating means of cultivating funding sources that are geared towards the promotion of radical social change. Fortunately though, in addition to INCITE!'s aforementioned book, which has helped break the unstated taboo surrounding the discussion of activist funding, another critical exception was provided in the June 2007 edition of the academic journal *Critical Sociology*. The editors of this path breaking issue of *Critical Sociology* don't beat around that bush and point out that:

The critical study of foundations is not a subfield in any academic discipline; it is not even an organized interdisciplinary grouping. This, along with concerns about personal defunding, limits its output, especially as compared to that of the many well-endowed centers for the uncritical study of foundations.⁹

Despite the dearth of critical inquiry into the historical influence of liberal foundations on the evolution of democracy, in the past few years a handful of books have endeavoured to provide a critical overview of the insidious anti-radicalising activities of liberal philanthropists. Thus the rest of this article will provide a brief review of some of this important work, however, before doing this I will briefly outline what I mean by progressive social change (that is, the type of social change that liberal foundations are loath to fund).

Why Progressive Social Change?

With the growth of popular progressive social movements during the 1960s in the US (and elsewhere), the global populace became increasingly aware of the criminal nature of many of their government's activities (both at home and abroad) which fuelled increasing popular resistance to imperialism. This in turn led influential scholars, working under the remit of the Trilateral Commission (a group founded by liberal philanthropists, see note 53), to controversially conclude (in 1975) that the increasing radicalism of the world's citizens stemmed from an "excess of democracy" which could only be quelled "by a greater degree of moderation in democracy".¹⁰ This elitist diagnosis makes sense when one considers Carole Pateman's observation that the dominant political and economic elites in the US posited that true democracy rested "not on the participation of the people, but on their nonparticipation."¹¹ However, contrary to the Trilateral Commission's desire to promote lowintensity democracy on a global scale, Gills, Rocamora, and Wilson suggest that:

Democracy requires more than mere maintenance of formal 'liberties'. [In fact, they argue that t]he only way to advance democracy in the Third World , or anywhere else, is to increase the democratic content of formal democratic institutions through profound social reform. Without substantial social reform and redistribution of economic assets, representative institutions - no matter how 'democratic' in form - will simply mirror the undemocratic power relations of society. Democracy requires a change in the balance of forces in society. Concentration of economic power in the hands of a small elite is a structural obstacle to democracy. It must be displaced if democracy is to emerge.¹²

In essence, one of the most important steps activists can take to help bring about truly progressive social change is to encourage the development of a politically active citizenry - that is, a public that participates in democratic processes, but not necessarily those promoted by the government. Furthermore, it is also vitally important that groups promoting more participatory forms of democracy do so in a manner consistent with the participatory principles they believe in.¹³

Michael Albert is an influential theorist of progressive politics, and he has written at (inspiring) length about transitionary strategies for

promoting participatory democracy in both his classic book *Parecon: Life After Capitalism*, and more recently in *Realizing Hope: Life Beyond Capitalism*. Simply put, Albert observes that: "A truly democratic community insures that the general public has the opportunity for meaningful and constructive participation in the formation of social policy." However, there is no single answer to determining the best way of creating a participatory society, and so he rightly notes that Parecon (which is short for participatory economics) "doesn't itself answer visionary questions bearing on race, gender, polity, and other social concerns, [but] it is at least compatible with and even, in some cases, perhaps necessary for, doing so."¹⁴

Finally, I would argue that in order to move towards a new participatory world order it is vitally important that progressive activists engage in radical critiques of society. Undertaking such radical actions may be problematic for some activists, because unfortunately the word radical is often used by the corporate media as a derogatory term for all manner of activists (whether they are radical or not). Yet this hijacking of the term perhaps makes it an even more crucial take that progressives work to reclaim this word as their own, so they can inject it back into their own work and analyses. Indeed, Robert Jensen's excellent book *Writing Dissent: Taking Radical Ideas from the Margins to the Mainstream* reminds us that:

... the origins of the word - radical, [comes] from the Latin *radicalis*, meaning 'root.' Radical analysis goes to the root of an issue or problem. Typically that means that while challenging the specific manifestations of a problem, radicals also analyse the ideological and institutional components as well as challenge the unstated assumptions and conventional wisdom that obscure the deeper roots. Often it means realizing that what is taken as an aberration or deviation from a system is actually the predictable and/or intended result of a system.¹⁵

The Liberal Foundations of Social Change

Now that I have briefly outlined why progressive social change is so important, it is useful to examine why liberal philanthropy - which has been institutionalised within liberal foundations - arose in the first place. Here it is useful to quote Nicolas Guilhot who neatly outlines the

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ideological reasons lying behind liberal philanthropy. He observes that in the face of the violent labor wars of the late 19th century that "directly threatened the economic interests of the philanthropists", liberal philanthropists realized:

... that social reform was unavoidable, [and instead] chose to invest in the definition and scientific treatment of the 'social questions' of their time: urbanization, education, housing, public hygiene, the 'Negro problem,' etc. Far from being resistant to social change, the philanthropists promoted reformist solutions that did not threaten the capitalistic nature of the social order but constituted a 'private alternative to socialism'.¹⁶

Andrea Smith notes that:

From their inception, [liberal] foundations focused on research and dissemination of information designed ostensibly to ameliorate social issues-in a manner, however, that did not challenge capitalism. For instance, in 1913, miners went on strike against Colorado Fuel and Iron, an enterprise of which 40 percent was owned by Rockefeller. Eventually, this strike erupted into open warfare, with the militia murdering several strikers during the Ludlow Massacre of April 20, 1914. During that same time, Jerome Greene, the Rockefeller Foundation secretary, identified research and information to quiet social and political unrest as a foundation priority. The rationale behind this strategy was that while individual workers deserved social relief. organized workers in the form of unions were a threat to society. So the Rockefeller Foundation heavily advertised its relief work for individual workers while at the same time promoting a pro-Rockefeller spin to the massacre.¹⁷

Writing in 1966, Carroll Quigley - who happened to be one of Bill Clinton's mentors¹⁸ - elaborates on the motivations driving the philanthropic colonisation of progressive social change:

More than fifty years ago [circa 1914] the Morgan firm decided to infiltrate the Left-wing political movements in the United States. This was relatively easy to do, since these groups were starved for funds and eager for a voice to reach

the people. Wall Street supplied both. The purpose was not to destroy, dominate, or take over but was really threefold: (1) to keep informed about the thinking of Left-wing or liberal groups; (2) to provide them with a mouthpiece so that they could 'blow off steam,' and (3) to have a final veto on their publicity and possibly on their actions, if they ever went 'radical.' There was nothing really new about this decision, since other financiers had talked about it and even attempted it earlier. What made it decisively important this time was the combination of its adoption by the dominant Wall Street financier, at a time when tax policy was driving all financiers to seek tax-exempt refuges for their fortunes, and at a time when the ultimate in Left-wing radicalism was about to appear under the banner of the Third International.¹⁹

One of the most important books exploring the detrimental influence of liberal foundations on social change was Robert Arnove's *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism*. In the introduction to this edited collection Arnove notes that:

A central thesis [of this book] is that foundations like Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford have a corrosive influence on a democratic society; they represent relatively unregulated and unaccountable concentrations of power and wealth which buy talent, promote causes, and, in effect, establish an agenda of what merits society's attention. They serve as 'cooling-out' agencies, delaying and preventing more radical, structural change. They help maintain an economic and political order, international in scope, which benefits the ruling-class interests of philanthropists and philanthropoids - a system which, as the various chapters document, has worked against the interests of minorities, the working class, and peoples.²⁰

With the aid of Nadine Pinede, Arnove recently updated this critique noting that, while the Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford foundations' "are considered to be among the most progressive in the sense of being forward looking and reform-minded", they are also "among the most controversial and influential of all the foundations".²¹ Indeed, as Edward H. Berman demonstrated in his book, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of*

Philanthropy,²² the activities of all three of these foundations are closely entwined with those of US foreign policy elites. This subject has also been covered in some depth in Frances Stonor Saunders book *Who Paid the Piper?: CIA and the Cultural Cold War*. She notes that:

During the height of the Cold War, the government committed vast resources to a secret programme of cultural propaganda in western Europe. A central feature of this programme was to advance the claim that it did not exist. It was managed, in great secrecy, by America's espionage arm, the Central Intelligence Agency. The centrepiece of this covert campaign was the Congress for Cultural Freedom [which received massive support from the Ford Foundation and was] run by CIA agent Michael Josselson from 1950 till 1967. Its achievements - not least its duration - were considerable. At its peak, the Congress for Cultural Freedom had offices in thirty-five countries, employed dozens of personnel, published over twenty prestige magazines, held art exhibitions, owned a news and features service. organized high-profile international conferences, and rewarded musicians and artists with prizes and public performances. Its mission was to nudge the intelligentsia of western Europe away from its lingering fascination with and Communism towards Marxism a view more accommodating of 'the American way.'²³

So given the elitist history of liberal foundations it is not surprising that Arnove and Pinede note that although the Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford foundations' "claim to attack the root causes of the ills of humanity, they essentially engage in ameliorative practices to maintain social and economic systems that generate the very inequalities and injustices they wish to correct."²⁴ Indeed they conclude that although the past few decades these foundations have adopted a "more progressive, if not radical, rhetoric and approaches to community building" that gives a "voice to those who have been disadvantaged by the workings of an increasingly global capitalist economy, they remain ultimately elitist and technocratic institutions."²⁵

Based on the knowledge of these critiques, it is then supremely ironic that progressive activists tend to underestimate the influence of liberal philanthropists, while simultaneously acknowledging the fundamental role played by conservative philanthropists in promoting neoliberal policies. Indeed, contrary to popular beliefs amongst progressives, much evidence supports the contention that liberal philanthropists and their foundations have been very influential in shaping the contours of American (and global) civil society, actively influencing social change through a process alternatively referred to as either channelling²⁶ or co-option.²⁷

Co-optation [being] a process through which the policy orientations of leaders are influenced and their organizational activities channeled. It blends the leader's interests with those of an external organization. In the process, ethnic leaders and their organizations become active in the state-run interorganizational system; they become participants in the decision-making process as advisors or committee members. By becoming somewhat of an insider the co-opted leader is likely to identify with the organization and its objectives. The leader's point of view is shaped through the personal ties formed with authorities and functionaries of the external organization.²⁸

The critical issue of the cooption of progressive groups by liberal foundations has also been examined in Joan Roelofs seminal book *Foundations and Public Policy: The Mask of Pluralism.*²⁹ In summary, Roelofs argues that:

... the pluralist model of civil society obscures the extensive collaboration among the resource-providing elites and the dependent state of most grassroots organizations. While the latter may negotiate with foundations over details, and even win some concessions, capitalist hegemony (including its imperial prerequisites) cannot be questioned without severe organizational penalties. By and large, it is the funders who are calling the tune. This would be more obvious if there were sufficient publicized investigations of this vast and important domain. That the subject is 'off-limits' for both academics and journalists is compelling evidence of enormous power.³⁰

Defanging the Threat of Civil Rights

The 1960s civil rights movement was the first documented social movement that received substantial financial backing from

philanthropic foundations.³¹ As might be expected, liberal foundation support went almost entirely to moderate professional movement organizations like, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and their Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Urban League, and foundations also helped launch President Kennedy's Voter Education Project.³² In the last case, foundation support for the Voter Education Project was arranged by the Kennedy administration, who wanted to dissipate black support of sit-in protests while simultaneously obtaining the votes of more African-Americans, a constituency that helped Kennedy win the 1960 election.³³

One example of the type of indirect pressure facing social movements reliant on foundation support can be seen by examining Martin Luther King, Jr.'s activities as his campaigning became more controversial in the years just prior to his assassination. On 18 February 1967, King held a strategy meeting where he said he wanted to take a more active stance in opposing the Vietnam War: noting that he was willing to break with the Johnson administration even if the Southern Christian Leadership Conference lost some financial support (despite it already being in a weak financial position, with contributions some 40 percent less than the previous year). In this case, it seems, King was referring to the potential loss of foundation support as, after his first speech against the war a week later (on 25 February), he again voiced his concerns that his new position would jeopardize an important Ford Foundation grant.³⁴

Thus, by providing selective support of activist groups during the 1960s, liberal foundations promoted such groups' independence from their unpaid constituents working in the grassroots, facilitating movement professionalization and institutionalization. This allowed foundations "to direct dissent into legitimate channels and limit goals to ameliorative rather than radical change",³⁵ in the process promoting a "narrowing and taming of the potential for broad dissent".³⁶ Herbert Haines supports this point and argues that the increasing militancy of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Congress for Racial Equality meant most foundation funding was directed to groups who expressed themselves through more moderate actions.³⁷ He referred to this as the "radical flank effect" - a process which described the way in which funding increased for nonmilitant or moderate groups (reliant on institutional tactics) as confrontational direct action protests increased.³⁸ As Jack Walker concludes, in his study of the influence of foundations on interest groups, the reasoning behind such an interventionist strategy is simple. He argues that:

[f]oundation officials believed that the long run stability of the representative policy making system could be assured only if legitimate organizational channels could be provided for the frustration and anger being expressed in protests and outbreaks of political violence.³⁹

From Apartheid to 'Democracy' and Onwards

Moving to South Africa's transition to 'democracy', Roelofs observes that:

In the case of South Africa , the challenge for Western elites was to disconnect the socialist and anti-apartheid goals of the African National Congress. Foundations aided in this process, by framing the debate in the United States and by creating civil-rights type NGOs in South Africa . In 1978 the Rockefeller Foundation convened an 11-person Study Commission on US Policy Toward Southern Africa, chaired by Franklin Thomas, President of the Ford Foundation; it also included Alan Pifer, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York . In Eastern Europe, the 1975 East-West European Security agreement, known as the "Helsinki Accords" prompted the foundations to create Helsinki Watch (now Human Rights Watch), an international NGO for monitoring the agreements; Rockefeller, Ford, and Soros Foundations are prominent supporters.⁴⁰

Roelofs also points out that in addition to coopting social movements, foundations have played an important role in promoting 'identity politics' which has served to promote fragmentation between similarly minded radical social movements.⁴¹ Madonna Thunder Hawk also critiques the narrow scope of most activists work:

Previously, organizers would lay down their issue when necessary and support another issue. Now, most organizers are very specialized, and cannot do anything unless they have a budget first. More, foundations will often expect organizations to be very specialized and won't fund work that is outside their funding priorities. This reality can limit an organization's ability to be creative and flexible as things change in our society.⁴²

Stephanie Guilloud and William Cordery support such ideas, and suggest that activist:

... work becomes compartmentalized products, desired or undesired by the foundation market, rated by trends or political relationships rather than depth of work. How often do we hear that 'youth work is hot right now'? Funders determine funding trends, and non-profits develop programs to bend to these requests rather than assess real needs and realistic goals. If we change our 'product' to meet foundation mandates, our organizations might receive additional funding and fiscal security. But more often than not, we have also compromised our vision and betrayed the communities that built us to address specific needs, concerns, and perspectives.⁴³

Likewise, Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo launches a similar broadside against multiculturalism, arguing that:

The existence of 'special' and 'non-white' programs emerges from the logic of the liberalist project of multiculturalism. While there are clear racial hierarchies structured into organizations, these programs are developed under a multiculturalist model that renders race marginal by heralding the primacy of culture... While culturally specific services and programs might appear to address the injuries of racism, this organizational strategy actually displaces race from the broader analysis effectively ignoring the power structure of white supremacy and the structured subjugation of people of color, which affects countless forms of violence against women. By adding a program ostensibly designed to serve the needs of a given community of color, the larger organization avoids direct accountability to that community. In other words, the organization's own white supremacy remains intact and fundamentally unchallenged, as are the countless forms of violence against women perpetuated by racism.44

... Thus, 'culturally competent' and/or multicultural organizational structures collude with white supremacy and violence against women of color, namely because this logic enables organizations to dismiss the centrality of

racism in all institutions and organizations in the United States. $^{\rm 45}$

World Social Forum: Funders' Call the Tune

As a result of the lack of critical inquiry into the influence of liberal philanthropy on progressive organizations, liberal foundations have quietly insinuated their way into the heart of the global social justice movement, having played a key role in founding the World Social Forum (WSF). Furthermore, it is not surprising that, when critiques of the WSF are made, they tend to be met with a resounding silence by progressive activists and their media (most of which have been founded and funded by liberal foundations, see later).⁴⁶

As the Research Unit for Political Economy astutely observes, the WSF "constitutes an important intervention by foundations in social movements internationally" because (1) many of the NGO's attending the WSF obtain state and/or foundation funding, and (2) "the WSF's material base - the funding for its activity - is heavily dependent on foundations."⁴⁷ It is perhaps stating the obvious to note that more attention should be paid to such important critiques; however, if further critical investigations then determined that such claims were unsubstantiated then the WSF could only be strengthened. On the other hand, if activists collectively decided that the receipt of liberal foundation funding is problematic - as happened at the 2004 WSF in Mumbai - then further steps must be immediately taken to address the issue. Yet, as the Research Unit for Political Economy point out, although:

... the WSF India committee's decision to disavow funds from certain institutions marked a victory for the critics of the WSF, it did not really resolve the issue. If the organizers disavowed funds from these sources on principle (rather than merely because uncomfortable questions were raised), it is difficult to understand why the prohibition did not extend as well to organizations *funded* by them. This left scope for the WSF to accept funds from organizations funded in turn by Ford. Moreover... the bulk of the WSF's expenses are borne by participating organizations, many of which are in turn funded by Ford and other such 'barred' sources.⁴⁸

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Clearly important (and concerning) questions have been raised about the democratic legitimacy of the WSF, but most activists still remain unaware of the existence of such well founded critiques. This is problematic and, as Stephanie Guilloud and William Cordery argue, although fundraising is "an important component of most organizing efforts in the United States", it:

... is usually perceived by activists as our nasty compromise within an evil capitalist structure. As long as we relegate fundraising to a dirty chore better handled by grant writers and development directors than organizers, we miss an opportunity to create stepping stones toward community-based economies.⁴⁹

However, as Dylan Rodriguez observes:

... when one attempts to engage [in] a critical discussion regarding the political problems of working with these and other foundations, and especially when one is interested in naming them as the gently repressive 'evil' cousins of the more prototypically evil right-wing foundations, the establishment Left becomes profoundly defensive of its financial patrons. I would argue that this is a liberalprogressive vision that marginalizes the radical, revolutionary, and proto-revolutionary forms of activism, insurrection, and resistance that refuse to participate in the [George] Soros charade of 'shared values,' and are uninterested in trying to 'improve the imperfect.' The social truth of the existing society is that it is based on the production of massive, unequal, and hierarchically organized disenfranchisement, suffering, and death of those populations who are targeted for containment and political/social liquidation-a violent social order produced under the dictates of 'democracy,' 'peace,' 'security,' and 'justice' that form the historical and political foundations of the verv same white civil society on which the NPIC [Non-Profit Industrial Complex] Left is based.⁵⁰

Guilloud and Cordery "believe it is better to be dissolved by the community than floated by foundations." Indeed, they go on to correctly state the obvious, by noting that community supported organizations will, by necessity, have to serve the needs of democracy because "[m] embers who contribute to an organization will stop contributing when the work is no longer valuable." $^{\rm S1}$

Moving Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex

People in non-profits are not necessarily consciously thinking that they are 'selling out'. But just by trying to keep funding and pay everyone's salaries, they start to unconsciously limit their imagination of what they *could* do. In addition, the non-profit structure supports a paternalistic relationship in which non-profits from outside our Communities fund their own hand-picked organizers, rather than funding us to do the work ourselves.⁵²

Given the historical overview of liberal foundations presented in this article it is uncontroversial to suggest that liberal philanthropists - who also support elite planning groups - will not facilitate the massive radical social changes that will encourage the global adoption of participatory democracy.⁵³ Taking a global view, James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer argue that most funding "for poverty alleviation through NGOs also has had little positive effect" and:

On the contrary, foreign aid directed toward NGOs has undermined national decision-making, given that most projects and priorities are set out by the European or USbased NGOs. In addition, NGO projects tend to co-opt local leaders and turn them into functionaries administering local projects that fail to deal with the structural problems and crises of the recipient countries. Worse yet, NGO funding has led to a proliferation of competing groups, which set communities and groups against each other, undermining existing social movements. Rather than compensating for the social damage inflicted by free market policies and conditions of debt bondage, the NGO channelled foreign aid complements the IFIs' [international financial institutions'] neo-liberal agenda.⁵⁴

Referring to the detrimental influence of the liberal philanthropy in the US, Andrea Smith also observes that:

[T]he NPIC [Non-Profit Industrial Complex] contributes to a mode of organizing that is ultimately unsustainable. To radically change society, we must build mass movements that can topple systems of domination, such as capitalism. However, the NPIC encourages us to think of social justice organizing as a career; that is, you do the work if you can get paid for it. However, a mass movement requires the involvement of millions of people, most of whom cannot get paid. By trying to do grassroots organizing through this careerist model, we are essentially asking a few people to work more than full-time to make up for the work that needs to be done by millions.

In addition, the NPIC promotes a social movement culture that is non-collaborative, narrowly focused, and competitive. To retain the support of benefactors, groups must compete with each other for funding by promoting only their own work, whether or not their organizing strategies are successful. This culture prevents activists from having collaborative dialogues where we can honestly share our failures as well as our successes. In addition, after being forced to frame everything we do as a 'success', we become stuck in having to repeat the same strategies because we insisted to funders they were successful, even if they were not. Consequently, we become inflexible rather than fluid and ever changing in our strategies, which is what a movement for social transformation really requires. And as we become more concerned with attracting funders than with organizing mass-based movements, we start niche marketing the work of our organizations.⁵⁵

Amara H. Perez and Sisters in Action for Power also add that:

In addition to the power and influence of foundation funding, the non-profit model itself has contributed to the co-optation of our work and institutionalized a structure that has normalized a corporate culture for the way our work is ultimately carried out.⁵⁶

Fortunately, the answers to the funding problems raised in this article are rather simple. However, given the lack of critical inquiry into the anti-democratic influence of liberal foundations on progressive social change, first and foremost progressive activists need to publicly

acknowledge that a problem exists before appropriate solutions can be devised and implemented. Therefore, the first step that I propose needs to be taken by progressive activists is to launch a vibrant public discussion of the broader role of liberal foundations in funding social change - an action that will rely for the most part upon the interest and support of grassroots activists all over the world.

Given the insidious activities of liberal foundations, the "very existence of many social justice organizations has often come to rest more on the effectiveness of professional (and amateur) grant writers than on skilled-much less 'radical' - political educators and organizers".⁵⁷ So now more than ever, it is vital that progressive citizens committed to a participatory democracy work to develop alternate funding mechanisms for sustaining grassroots activism so they can break the "insidious cycle of competition and co-optation" set up by liberal foundations and their cohorts.⁵⁸ Indeed as Guilloud and Cordery point out, "[d]eveloping a real community-based economic system that redistributes wealth and allows all people to gain access to what they need is essential to complete our vision of a liberated world. Grassroots fundraising strategies are a step in that direction."⁵⁹

Unfortunately, raising awareness of the vexing issues raised in this article may be harder than one might first expect. This is because in some instances the progressive media themselves may be preventing an open discussion of the influence of liberal philanthropy on social change - due to their reliance (or at least good relations) with liberal foundations. So sadly, as Bob Feldman observes, "[w]hen the rare report calls attention to the possibility of foundation influence over the leftwing media or think tanks, a typical attitude is unqualified denial."⁶⁰ Feldman concludes:

... that organizations and media generally considered leftwing have in recent years received substantial funding from liberal foundations. This information alone is significant, as left activists and scholars are either unaware of or uninterested in examining the nature and consequences of such financing. Furthermore, although a definitive evaluation would require a massive content analysis project, there is much evidence that the funded left has moved towards the mainstream as it has increased its dependence on foundations. This is shown by the 'progressive,' reformist tone of formerly radical organizations; the gradual disappearance of challenges to the economic and political power of corporations or United States militarism and imperialism; and silence on the relationship of liberal foundations to either politics and culture in general, or to their own organizations. Critiquing right wing foundations, media, and think tanks may be fair game, but to explain our current situation, or to discover what has happened to the left, a more inclusive investigation is needed.⁶¹

It is clear that the barriers to spreading the word about liberal philanthropy's overt colonization of progressive social change are large but they are certainly not insurmountable to dedicated activists. There are still plenty of alternative media outlets that should be willing to distribute trenchant critiques of liberal philanthropy given persistent pressure from the activist community, while internet blogs can also supplement individual communicative efforts to widen the debate. If activists fail to address the crucial issue of liberal philanthropy now this will no doubt have dire consequences for the future of progressive activism - and democracy more generally - and it is important to recognise that liberal foundations are not all powerful and that the future, as always, lies in our hands and not theirs.

Notes

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/ept/politics/apsa/PapersFV/IntRel_IPE/Barker,%20Michael.pdf>.

³ Here it is important to note that in all four countries that Robinson examined, the 'democratic transitions' "were touted by policymakers, and praised by journalists, supportive scholars, and public commentators, as 'success stories' in which the United States broke sharply with earlier support for authoritarianism and dictatorship and contributed in a positive

¹ Damien C. Cahill, *The Radical Neo-liberal Movement as a Hegemonic Force in Australia, 1976-1996* (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of Wollongong, 2004); Alex Carey, *Taking the Risk out of Democracy: Propaganda in the US and Australia* (Sydney, N.S.W.: University of New South Wales Press, 1995); Sally Covington, *Moving a Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 1997).

² Michael Barker, 'Taking the Risk Out of Civil Society: Harnessing Social Movements and Regulating Revolutions', Refereed paper presented to the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference, 25-27 September 2006.

way to 'democracy,' and therefore as 'models' for future US interventions of this type." William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 114.

- ⁴ Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, pp. 28-9. For related online resources see, William I. Robinson, *A Faustian Bargain: Intervention in the Nicaraguan Elections and American Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era* (Westview Press, 1992), http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/robinson/Assets/pdf/
- ⁵ However, he does specify that it is important to note that the US "is not acting on behalf of a 'US' elite, but [instead is] playing a leadership role on behalf of an emergent transnational elite"; and that the "impulse to 'promote democracy' "essentially arises from the need "to secure the underlying objective of maintaining essentially undemocratic societies inserted into an unjust international system."Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, pp. 20, 6. Robinson also adds that: "A caveat must be stressed. US preference for polyarchy is a general guideline of post-Cold War foreign policy and not a universal prescription. Policymakers often assess that authoritarian arrangements are best left in place in instances where the establishment of polyarchic systems is an unrealistic, high-risk, or unnecessary undertaking." Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, p. 112.
- ⁶ Barry Gills, Joen Rocamora, and Richard Wilson, *Low Intensity Democracy: Political Power in the Order* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), pp. 26-7.
- 7 Leslie Wayne, 'And for His Next Feat, a Billionaire Sets Sights on Bush', New York Times, May 31, 2004.
- ⁸ Indeed as INCITE! note in their book *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*: "We took a stand against state funding since we perceived that antiviolence organizations who had state funding had been co-opted. It never occurred to us to look at foundation funding in the same way. However, in a trip to (funded, ironically, by the Ford Foundation), we met with many non-funded organizations that criticized us for receiving foundation grants. When we saw that groups with much less access to resources were able to do amazing work without funding, we began to question our reliance on foundation grants." Andrea Smith, 'Introduction: The Revolution Will Not Be Funded', In: INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (eds.) *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*: *Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End Press, 2007), p. 1.
- 9 Annon, 'Note on this Special Issue of Critical Sociology', Critical Sociology, 33 (2007), p. 387.
- ¹⁰ Crozier, M., S. P. Huntington and J. Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy: Report* on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission (New York: New York University Press, 1975), p. 134.
- ¹¹ Carole Pateman, 'The Civic Culture: A Philosophical Critique', In: G. A. Almond and (eds.) *The Civic Culture: A Philosophical Critique* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1989), p. 79.

- ¹² Gills, Rocamora, and Wilson, *Low Intensity Democracy*, p. 29.
- ¹³ For a major critique of 'progressive' activism in the US see Dana Fisher's *Activism, Inc.: How the Outsourcing of Grassroots Campaigns Is Strangling Progressive Politics in America,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006). Similarly, also see my article 'Hijacking Human Rights: A Critical Examination of Human Rights Watch's Branch and their Links to the 'Democracy' Establishment', *Znet*, 3 August 2007. <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=13436 >
- ¹⁴ Michael Albert, *Realizing Hope: Life Beyond Capitalism* (London: Zed Books, 2006), pp. 24, 185.
- ¹⁵ Robert Jensen, *Writing Dissent: Taking Radical Ideas from the Margins to the Mainstream* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 7.
- ¹⁶ Nicolas Guilhot, 'Reforming the World: George Soros, Global Capitalism and the Philanthropic Management of the Social Sciences', *Critical Sociology*, Volume 33, Number 3, 2007, pp. 451-2.
- ¹⁷ Andrea Smith, 'Introduction: The Revolution Will Not Be Funded', p. 4.
- ¹⁸ Daniel Brandt, 'Clinton, Quigley, and Conspiracy: What's going on here?' NameBase NewsLine, No. 1 (April-June 1993). http://www.namebase.org/news01.html>
- ¹⁹ Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 938.
- ²⁰ Robert F. Arnove, 'Introduction', In: Robert F. Arnove, (ed.), *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, 1980), p. 1.
- ²¹ Robert Arnove and Nadine Pinede, 'Revisiting the "Big Three" Foundations', *Critical Sociology*, Volume 33, Number 3, 2007, p. 391.
- ²² Edward H. Berman, The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983). For excerpts: http://www.icdc.com/%7Epaulwolf/oss/ideologyofphilanthropy.htm>
- ²³ Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999), p. 1.
 For a useful review of Saunders' book see, James Petras, 'The CIA and the Cultural Cold War Revisited', *Monthly Review*, November 1999.
 http://monthlyreview.org/1999/11/01/the-cia-and-the-cultural-cold-war-revisited
 Also see Hugh Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left, and the Cold War: Calling the Tune?* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); and Paul Wolf, 'OSS and the Development

of Psychological Warfare'.

<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/oss/foundations.htm>

- ²⁴ Robert Arnove and Nadine Pinede, 'Revisiting the "Big Three" Foundations', p. 393.
- ²⁵ Robert Arnove and Nadine Pinede, 'Revisiting the "Big Three" Foundations', p. 422.

- ²⁶ Craig J. Jenkins, 'Channeling Social Protest: Foundation Patronage of Contemporary Social Movements', In: W. W. Powell and E. S. Clemens, (eds.), *Private Action and the Public Good* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 206-216.
- ²⁷ Robert F. Arnove (ed.), *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism*; Donald Fisher, 'The Role of Philanthropic Foundations in the Reproduction and Production of Hegemony: Rockefeller Foundations and the Social Sciences', Sociology, vol. 17, no. 2 (1983), pp. 206-233; Joan Roelofs, Foundations and Public Policy: *The Mask of Pluralism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).: John Wilson, 'Corporatism and the Professionalization of Reform', Journal of Political and Military Sociology, vol. 11 (1983), pp. 52-68. Few researchers would argue that all foundations actively attempt to deliberately co-opt all social movements, although the larger ones like the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations have certainly successfully done this in the past. Craig Jenkins (1998, p. 212) proposes his channeling thesis is more appropriate than the cooption model because it: (1) considers "that foundation goals are complex, ranging from genuine support of movement goals to social control" (a point the co-option thesis also acknowledges), (2) identifies the trend towards professionalization (a process also identified by the co-option thesis) and (3) this professionalization has led to greater mobilizations and successes than would have occurred otherwise. This last point is certainly debatable, as the history of social change seems to suggest that mass grassroots campaigns have far more progressive influence on political institutions than professional advocacy groups.

Deborah McCarthy (2004, p. 254) suggests that the "social relations" approach to grantee/funder relations "presents a dialectical model in which both grantees and funders influence each other" as opposed to "the channeling and co-optation theories [which she argues] present a one-way model in which foundations influence grantees but not the other way around." In response, I would argue that it is clear that foundation funding is dialectical, and it is important not to write off the work of those she presents as "one-way models" because clearly each funding relationship will vary from another, and the latter models benefit by incorporating the unequal power evident between funders' and grantees. McCarthy (2004, p. 258) notes that activist/funders often have to trick their foundations to support environmental justice projects by using "terminology with issues that their foundation's boards and donors already fund." McCarthy discusses some ways in which activists and funders' may begin to work around three major problems associated with foundation funding of the environmental justice movement which are: "programmatic emphases on project-specific grants, outcome-specific evaluation criteria, and short-term grants" (2004, p. 263). See Deborah McCarthy, 'Environmental Justice Grantmaking: Elites and Activists Collaborate to Transform Philanthropy', Sociological Inquiry, Vol. 74, No. 2 (2004) pp. 250-270.

- ²⁸ Raymond Breton, *The Governance of Ethnic Communities: Political Structures and Processes in Canada* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1990).
- ²⁹ Joan Roelofs, Foundations and Public Policy: The Mask of Pluralism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003). Extracts from this book can be found online http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/oss/maskofpluralism.htm>
- Joan Roelofs, 'Foundations and Collaboration', Critical Sociology, Vol. 33,No. 3 (2007) p. 502. Roelofs' talk, 'The Invisible Hand of Corporate Capitalism' summarises the arguments presented in her book and is available here: <http://www.grassrootspeace.org/edrussell/JoanRoelofs18April07AImedia.mp 3>
- ³¹ Foundation funding for social movements was for the most part nonexistent before the 1960s, with foundation grants tending to focus on more general issues like education. By 1970 this had changed and 65 foundations distributed 311 grants to social activists worth around \$11 million.
- ³² Craig J. Jenkins and Craig M. Eckert, 'Channeling Black Insurgency: Elite Patronage and Professional Social Movement Organizations in the Development of the Black Movement', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51(1986).
- ³³ Craig J. Jenkins, 'Channeling Social Protest: Foundation Patronage of Contemporary Social Movements', p., 212.
- ³⁴ David J. Garrow, Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (Random House, 1988), pp. 545-6.
- ³⁵ Frances B. McCrea and Gerald E. Markle, *Minutes to Midnight: Nuclear Weapons Protest in America* (Newbury Park, Calif.: SAGE, 1989), p. 37.
- ³⁶ John D. McCarthy, David W. Britt, and Mark Wolfson, 'The Institutional Channeling of Social Movements by the State in the United States', In: L. Kriesberg and M. Spencer (eds.) *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* (Greenwich, CT.: JAI Press, 1991), pp. 69-70.
- ³⁷ Herbert H. Haines, *Black Radicals and the Civil Rights Mainstream, 1954-1970* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), pp. 82-99.
- ³⁸ Herbert Haines, 'Black Radicalization and the Funding of Civil Rights', Social Problems, vol. 32 (1984), pp. 31-43.
- ³⁹ Jack L. Walker, 'The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in', American Political Science Review, vol. 77 (1983) p. 401.
- ⁴⁰ Joan Roelofs, 'Foundations and Collaboration', *Critical Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2007, p. 497.
- ⁴¹ Joan Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policγ*, p. 44. For more on this subject see David Rieff, 'Multiculturalism's Silent Partner', *Harper's*, August 1993, pp. 62-72.

Alisa Bierria (2007) points out that: "All too often, inclusivity has come to mean that we start with an organizing model developed with white, middleclass people in mind, and then simply add a multicultural component to it. We should *include* as many voices as possible, without asking what exactly are we being included in? However, as Kimberle Crenshaw has noted, 'it is not enough to be sensitive to difference, we must ask what difference the difference makes. That is, instead of saying, how can we *include* women of color, women with disabilities, etc., we must ask, what would our analysis and organizing practice look like if we centered them in it? By following a politics of re-centering rather than inclusion, we often find that we see the issue differently, not just for the group in question, but everyone." Alisa Bierria, 'Communities against rape and abuse (CARA)', In: INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (eds.) *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End Press, 2007), pp. 153-4.

- ⁴² Madonna Thunder Hawk, 'Native Organizing Before the Non-Profit Industrial Complex', In: INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (eds.) *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End Press, 2007), p. 106.
- ⁴³ Stephanie Guilloud and William Cordery, 'Fundraising is Not a Dirty Word', In: INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (eds.) *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End Press, 2007), p. 108.
- 44 Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo, "we were never meant to survive" Fighting Violence Against Women and the Forth World War', In: INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (eds.) *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End Press, 2007), pp. 115-6.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 116.
- ⁴⁶ Michael Barker, 'The Liberal Foundations of Media Reform? Creating Sustainable Funding Opportunities for Radical Media Reform', Global Media (Submitted); Bob Feldman, 'Report from the Field: Left Media and Left Think Tanks - Foundation-Managed Protest?', *Critical Sociology*, 33 (2007).
- ⁴⁷ Research Unit for Political Economy, 'Foundations and Mass Movements: The Case of the World Social Forum', *Critical Sociology*, 33 (3), 2007, p. 506.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 529-30.
- ⁴⁹ Stephanie Guilloud and William Cordery, 'Fundraising is Not a Dirty Word', p. 107.
- ⁵⁰ Dylan Rodriguez, 'The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex', In: INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (eds.) *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Boston: South End Press, 2007), p. 35-6.
- ⁵¹ Stephanie Guilloud and William Cordery, 'Fundraising is Not a Dirty Word', p. 110.
- ⁵² Madonna Thunder Hawk, 'Native Organizing Before the *Non-Profit Industrial Complex*', pp. 105-6.
- ⁵³ Two of the most influential liberal foundations, the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, created and continue to provide substantial financial aid to elite planning groups like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission. For example, the Ford Foundation's 2006 Annual Report (p. 62) notes that they gave the Council on Foreign Relations a

\$200,000 grant "For research, seminars and publications on the role of women in conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and state building." Furthermore, as Roelofs (2003, p. 98-9) notes:

"During the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) debate, the EPI [Economic Policy Institute] (funded by Ford and others) made technical objections to the models supporting the trade agreement. At the same time, a much greater effect was produced by Ford funding to the other side, which included grants to the Institute for International Economics, a think tank that emphasizes the benefits of NAFTA. In addition, "the Ford Foundation also awarded grants to environmental groups and the Southwest Voters Research Institute to convene forums on NAFTA. These resulted in an alliance of 100 Latino organizations and elected officials, called the Latino Consensus on NAFTA, which provided conditional support for the agreement."

Also see Laurence H. Shoup, and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977); Holly Sklar, *Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning For World Management* (Boston: South End Press, 1980).

- ⁵⁴ James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, 'Age of Reverse Aid: Neo-liberalism as Catalyst of Regression', In: Jan P. Pronk (ed.) *Catalysing Development* (Blackwell Publishers, 2004), pp. 70-1.
- ⁵⁵ Andrea Smith, 'Introduction: The Revolution Will Not Be Funded', p. 10.
- ⁵⁶ Amara H. Perez, and Sisters in Action for Power, 'Between Radical Theory and Community Praxis: Reflections on Organizing and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex', In: INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (eds.) The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex (Boston: South End Press, 2007), p. 93.
- ⁵⁷ Dylan Rodriguez, 'The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex', pp. 35-6.
- ⁵⁸ Brian Tokar, *Earth for Sale: Reclaiming Ecology in the Age of Corporate Greenwash* (Boston: South End Press, 1997), p. 214.
- 59 Stephanie Guilloud and William Cordery, 'Fundraising is Not a Dirty Word', p. 111. Making this transition may be easier than expected, because Rodriguez (2007) suggest that "the ongoing work to maintain and prospect foundation money, combined with administrative obligations and developing infrastructure, was more taxing and exhausting than confronting any institution to fight for a policy change." Dylan Rodriguez, 'The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex', p. 27.
- ⁶⁰ Bob Feldman, 'Report from the Field: Left Media and Left Think Tanks -Foundation-Managed Protest?', p. 428.
- ⁶¹ Bob Feldman, 'Report from the Field', p. 445.